

Benha University

Faculty of Arts

Dept. of English Language and Literature

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History of English Language and Literature

From Antiquity to the 16th Century

For First Year Students

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First Grade

First semester

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This textbook is designed for students for whom this is the first experience of the language of the old period of English, namely the period from the time of the invasions of Britain in the fifth century until the time of the Norman Conquest.

The history of the English language really started with the arrival of three Germanic tribes who invaded Britain during the 5th century AD. These tribes, the Angles, the Saxons and the Jutes, crossed the North Sea from what today is Denmark and northern Germany. At that time the inhabitants of Britain spoke a Celtic language. But most of the Celtic speakers were pushed west and north by the invaders - mainly into what is now Wales, Scotland and Ireland. The Angles came from "Englaland" and their language was called "Englisc" - from which the words "England" and "English" are derived.

The invading Germanic tribes spoke similar languages, which in Britain developed into what we now call Old English. Old English did not sound or look like English today. Native English speakers now would have great difficulty understanding Old English.

Nevertheless, about half of the most commonly used words in Modern English have Old English roots. The words be, strong and water, for example, derive from Old English. Old English was spoken until around 1100.

Chapter 2: History of the English Language

If it is undoubtedly true that the first sighting of the English of the earliest time comes as a shock to most beginning students, there can be no doubt that an understanding of that language is essential for a proper appreciation of how English has evolved over time.

Throughout the book the writer tried to relate Old English structures to those of the present day. The principal motivation for this is to demonstrate how much of the language has remained stable over time, rather than merely to assist the reader in his or her understanding of Old English.

What is Language?

Language is a fundamental human faculty used for the expression of our thoughts or ideas, face-to-face communication, and many other purposes. Most humans are born with the ability to acquire language automatically and effortlessly if provided the right input by their environment. It is estimated that there are 6,000 to 7,000

languages in the world. The number of languages is decreasing rapidly as some languages disappear and a few others – Chinese, English, Spanish, Indonesian, and Hindi – become more widespread.

The focus of this book is the English language. The word ‘English’ has a number of widely different meanings. For instance, it describes the people from a particular part of Great Britain. It also refers to a particular language, the English language, and is used very broadly in this sense. English is Germanic in origin but roughly half of its words derive from contacts with French and Latin. As we will see, English has expanded from having a few speakers in one area to having many speakers in many geographic areas.

One way to define English is through its origins and history. We find **Celtic** and **Roman** presence in Britain before the coming of the **Germanic** tribes who brought with them what is to become English. Later, we also see Scandinavian, French, and Latin influences.

Another way to define English is to compare it to other languages and earlier stages. We apply this approach and compare Modern English to Old English and other languages. We keep this approach in mind since we will see English changing from one type of language to another in fewer than 1,500 years.

The origins of English

When did English begin? The question is often asked, but the answer is surprisingly dull. The standard view is that English began when the Anglo-Saxons began to settle in Britain. Who, then, were the Anglo- Saxons? Where did they come from? And when did they come to Britain?

From the accounts of Roman historians, we know that **Germanic** tribes had spread over northern Europe by the time of Christ. Such tribes did not form any unified confederation. Rather, they seemed to have been organised on a small group basis. Before the fifth century,

the spread of these tribes did not include any part of Britain.

Until the year 410 most of Britain had been under Roman control, although the native inhabitants were Celts, speaking various forms of **Celtic**, which give us present-day Welsh, Irish, Gaelic and Breton, as well as the now-dead languages Cornish and Manx. No doubt many Celts also spoke Latin, the language of the Roman Empire. But with the departure of the Romans, the continental Germanic tribes saw in Britain a nearby land ripe for the picking.

The eighth-century English historian Bede tells of how, in the year 449, Hengist and Horsa were invited by the Celtic king Vortigern to help him against his enemies, and how they proceeded to establish a base for themselves in Kent. Bede also says that these first settlers came from three Germanic tribes, the Angles, the Saxons and the Jutes.

Bede's account, no matter how careful, cannot be an entirely accurate reflection of what happened three centuries earlier, a period for which there were no contemporary records and whose history was recorded orally and passed down from generation to generation.

The language these settlers spoke was called *Englisc* (later called English) by them, but it could not have been very different from the languages spoken by those they had left behind on the mainland of Europe. Of course, if you compare present-day English with German or Dutch or Frisian you will immediately notice many differences. But these were absent, or only minimally present during the Anglo-Saxon period. In the last 1,500 years English has grown less and less Germanic in character.

It is important to stress that there is a continuous line of development between Old English and present-day English. There is more in common between the two than first meets the eye, and the book shall try to demonstrate

these common factors as often as possible. The meaning of 'English' can be given through its origin and history.

The British Isles have been inhabited by different people for a long time and before they were islands. The excavations in southern England show that early humans were present possibly 500,000 years ago in what we now call England. These hominids, however, are assumed not to have had language. They used tools to wound and kill big animals and may have continued to live there until the Ice Age.

After the Ice Age, humans again start to occupy Britain around 10,000 years ago and 5000 years ago sees the construction of Stonehenge. We know very **little** about the **pre-Indo European** languages these people spoke. Vennemann argues that the ancestors of one of them, Pictish, may have spoken a Semitic language. After the coming of the Celts around 3,000 years ago, we start to know a little more. The Celts encountered the Pictish speakers and possibly influenced that language. Celtic

languages were spoken all over Europe and there were many tribes and some migrated to England/Britain. One of these tribes may have been given a name such as *prytani* from which the names Britain and British may derive. In Britain, the Celtic languages survive to the present in Wales, Scotland, and Ireland. Irish English and Scottish.

Varieties of English are influenced by the Celtic languages. Just as the Celts displaced or mixed with the people inhabiting Britain before them, they and the languages they spoke were later displaced and pushed further west. Nowadays, some of these languages are being revitalized (e.g. Welsh in Wales and Gaelic in Scotland and Ireland).

The Celts in Britain came into contact with the Romans and Latin when the Romans came to Britain 2000 years or more ago. The Roman Empire ruled much of Europe up to that time. It collapsed and the troops were withdrawn from Britain around 410. Because

of the political power of the Roman Empire, Latin was spoken in parts of Britain and the European continent and it exerted a strong influence on Celtic and Germanic languages.

Words such as wall, kitchen, wine, mile and street were borrowed from Latin into Germanic and came into English via Germanic. The settlements and roads of the Romans were extensive and remained important even after they left the island in 410. The Latin influence continues through medieval and renaissance times, not through actual migrations but through the Catholic Church and intellectual developments such as Humanism and the Renaissance.

English officially starts when the Germanic tribes and their languages reach the British Isles, in 449. One account tells of Hengist and Horsa being invited by the Celtic king Vortigern to help fight the northern Picts and later turning against Vortigern. There are of course earlier contacts between the continent and Britain.

For instance, during the Roman occupation, many speakers of Germanic dialects served in the Roman army; there were many trade contacts as well. Slavery was also widespread in Europe, and it provided another means of contact between Celtic and Germanic speakers and Roman culture.

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, one version of which was completed in 1154, tells the history of England from the time of Julius Caesar to 1154 (available in Modern English at www.omacl.org/Anglo)., several Germanic tribes – **the Frisians, the Angles, the Saxons**, and possibly the **Jutes** – occupied the British Isles. **The word ‘English’ is** derived from one of these tribes – the Angles. The Germanic tribes (e.g. the Franks, Goths, Angles, Saxons, Vandals, and Lombards) differed culturally from each other, but it is not clear how distinct their languages were.

Some of the ones around the North Sea may have spoken a North Sea Germanic. What started as a Germanic dialect spoken in a small part of England is now a

language spoken by over a billion people in many parts of the world (as a first or second language).

Even though it is a Germanic language, English has adopted a large number of words from other languages. It is estimated that half of the vocabulary of English comes from French and Latin.

The language we currently refer to as English is the partial result of the borrowings discussed above and it can be defined as the collection of words that were selected to appear in a particular dictionary. The collections of different dictionaries differ in number considerably: some contain 60,000, others 600,000 words. Most native speakers of English are estimated to have a vocabulary of 40,000 to 60,000 words.

It is debatable whether pairs such as read and reader are two words or one, and that affects the numbers on the English language and its history. However, even if we knew all the words in the OED (and many are archaic), we still would not 'know' the English language.

We need rules to put the words together into sentences or, in other words, a grammar. Grammar generates a language: the structure of the sounds (phonetics and phonology), words (morphology), sentences (syntax) and the rules for understanding the meaning (semantics) and appropriate use (pragmatics).

The goal of this book is to describe the structure of English and how its words and structures have emerged and changed over the last 1,500 years. In the next section, we briefly examine the structure of English by comparing Modern English and earlier stages of English

Test yourself.

- 1- The language we currently refer to as English is the partial result of borrowings. Discuss
- 2- What do you know about **The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle?**
- 3- **Language** is a fundamental human faculty used for the expression of our thoughts and creative ideas. Explain

Chapter: 3

Modern English compared to Old English

We will examine some of the major differences on three levels: sounds, words, and sentences. Read the first sentence of the famous Caedmon's Hymn, from a manuscript dated 737, and compare it with a word-byword gloss and the Modern English translation. Glosses for Old English (OE) are usually done as in (1). I have put in the hyphens to show the endings but they are not in the Old English manuscripts; look at the list of abbreviations for what pl, and inf, and gen mean.

What do you observe?

(1) Nu scyl-un herg-an hefaenrica-es uard

**Now should-pl praise-inf heaven.kingdom-gen
guardian**

**‘Now we should praise the guardian of the heavenly
kingdom’.**

You might notice that there is no letter v in hefaen ‘heaven’ and that the u in uard ‘guard’ is pronounced differently – like w and unlike the present day, u in guard

or tune. It is not completely clear how the Old English *sc* and *g* are pronounced: *sk* and *g* or *sh* and *y*. With respect to the words and sentences, we notice the lack of grammatical words such as *of*, *the*, and *a*. The Old English sentence in (1) contains five words, whereas the Modern English one has twice as many. The additional words in Modern English fulfill a grammatical function performed by endings such as *-es* in Old English. As is obvious, quite a number of changes have occurred on all three levels mentioned above. First, we will look at the sounds of Modern English.

Depending on the variety, Modern English has 13 or 14 different vowels: *bit*, *beet*, *bait*, *bet*, *bat*, *but*, *bye*, *boy*, *boat*, *boot*, *bout*, *bath*, and *bore* all contain different vowel sounds. Every language has a unique sound system. English has at least 25 consonants. Other languages have different numbers:

The most unusual English consonant is perhaps the one spelled as th, which, as we will see, represents two different sounds. Many other languages, and many varieties of English, do not have this sound. When speakers of such languages first learn a variety of English where th does occur, they often pronounce th as d in that, as t in thing, as f in mouth, or as v in mother.

In New York City English, for instance, that is often pronounced dat. Substituting d, t, f, or v for th does not happen randomly, English syllable structure is complex: there are English words such as strikes and splits, with three consonants at the beginning of the syllable/word and two at the end. Across the world's languages, perhaps the most common syllable pattern is consonant-vowel (or CV)

To make sense, sounds need to be combined into words and words into sentences. One of the major functions of language is to indicate who does what to whom (and where, when, how, and why that occurs). Languages differ in how they mark these functions –

through endings on the verbs and nouns or through word order and grammatical words (prepositions and pronouns). Languages such as Chinese have almost no endings and use word order and grammatical words to mark the functions of the different elements in a sentence.

On the other hand, many languages of the Americas have multiple prefixes on the verb and the verb can represent an entire sentence. For instance, Navajo *naashné* has two prefixes and a stem (*na-sh-né*), and it means ‘around-I-play’; English would translate that as ‘I am playing’, using three words.

The endings in Old English express what word order and prepositions do in Modern English. This is one of the major changes that occurred between Old and Modern English, a change from synthetic to analytic.

One last issue to be introduced is that of varieties within a single language. Linguists often distinguish

among varieties of region, social class, and register, or level of formality.

The branch of linguistics that is particularly interested in varieties is called sociolinguistics. What is often referred to as the standard language is the language of one social or regional group and is typically taught in schools, spoken (and written) by journalists. It is a formal variety or style or register. Formal styles use more (Latinate) loanwords. As we will see, throughout the history of English, standard varieties were established in a somewhat arbitrary fashion.

Some terms for styles and varieties of English

Styles: formal style, usually taught in schools and used by journalists/editors; it has grammars and dictionaries; often referred to as the standard colloquial, informal style, often used in speech, with slang as one kind of colloquial speech Varieties: regional, variety typical for a region, also called social dialect, variety typical for a social group, e.g. African American, men, upper class, also called sociolect register, variety typical

for an occupation or situation, e.g. computer engineers, church, chess or baseball game, also called jargon. Varieties and styles overlap: regional speech is colloquial, and varieties due to register (e.g. computer jargon) can be related to social class. Slang, for example, can be used in colloquial speech as well as in regional and social varieties. The terms introduced above can also be used to discuss Australian or Kenyan English, for example, or varieties spoken by non-native speakers, such as Chinese English. Some people are using the term English Language Complex (ELC) to refer to all varieties of English (see e.g. Mesthrie & Bhatt 2008).

External and internal change

The question of language change is really a question of why varieties develop within a language. For instance, Canadian and South African English have developed their own identities even though they are still ‘English’ in their grammars. In this section, we discuss politically, geographically, and socially motivated change – known as external change – and linguistically motivated change, or

internal change. External and internal change are sometimes ascribed to ‘chance’ and ‘necessity’, respectively (Lightfoot 1979: 405). Many times, internal and external change interact.

External changes are brought about by language contact (between speakers of different languages), or innovations by speakers, or issues of political or social identity. Recent adoptions of new words such as goji berry, to overshare, and lol are instances of external change. Oceans may facilitate contact whereas mountain ranges may stop it. External changes are unpredictable since it is impossible to foresee who will migrate where, or what fashion will catch on. Looking at when loanwords first appear in a language gives a good clue to social change: the appearance of lots of French loans around 1250 tells us something about a change that happened to society as a whole.

Internal changes may have to do with ease of articulation. For instance, the sound represented by m is

easier to say before a p than before a k and languages often change towards what requires less effort. However, Labov (2010: 89) chronicles vowel shifts that result in making communication harder, so ease is only one possible factor.

Internal change also occurs when speakers stop using endings (or inflections) on verbs and nouns and start to rely on words such as *of*, *for*, *the*, and *have*. The traditional reason for the loss of endings is that the stress shifted in Germanic to a fixed position, namely the root of a word, and that the endings became phonetically less prominent.

Internal reasons have to do with children analyzing the language they hear in a slightly different way from the generation before them (and building their grammars accordingly).

Often the changes caused by external factors lead to changes in the actual grammar or sound system. As we will see in later chapters, the influx of French and other loan words may have led to the incorporation of *v* and *z*

into the English sound system. The opposite occurs as well. Internal changes, such as the frequent use of like by certain age groups or Canadian eh, can in turn become markers of identity. When the Germanic tribes began to settle in Britain around 450, the Germanic dialects eventually pushed out the Celtic languages to the periphery.

In the 6th century, the conversion to Christianity introduced Latin words, such as abbot, altar, and hymn, into English, sometimes through Celtic since many missionaries came from Ireland.

Between the 8th and 10th centuries, the Scandinavians raided Britain. They also started extensive settlements. Scandinavian may be the most important of the external influences on English grammar and vocabulary.

Words such as bask, call, crave, egg, fellow, ill, keel, leg, odd, screech, and thrive are borrowed from it. The disappearance of Old English endings and the switch to a

stricter word order might also be the result of the Scandinavian influence on the grammar. Scandinavian words are often not seen as ‘foreign’ since they are very similar to words of English origin and are often ‘everyday’ words. The latter shows the Scandinavian and English lived in close contact. In 1066, William of Normandy arrived and defeated Harold during the Battle of Hastings, French became the language of the nobility and the court and much new vocabulary was introduced. The borrowed words include many political and cultural terms, such as government, authority, and judge, in contrast to the ‘everyday’ vocabulary borrowed from Scandinavian.

Important are the love in the Renaissance for Greek and Latin terms, the post-1700 spread of English to the colonies – resulting in new words being adopted and varieties being formed – and the changes in the technology from the 19th century to the present.

Periods of English

Old English (OE) 450–1150

Middle English (ME) 1150–1500

Early Modern (EMod) 1500–1700

Modern (ModE) 1700–now

Except for the beginning, which is arbitrary, the division is a mixture of external and internal factors. Internally, there is a difference between Old and Middle English in that Old English has numerous endings on nouns and verbs whereas Middle English uses more grammatical words, such as prepositions, articles, and auxiliaries. However, many people argue that external changes – such as the Norman conquest of 1066 – may be seen as a direct cause of the transition from Old to Middle English.

Most people who study the history of English agree that Old English does not abruptly change around 1150 but develops into Middle English over a period of time. The reason 1150 is chosen here is that texts are written

(e.g., the last part of the Peterborough version of the Anglo Saxon Chronicle), that are definitely ‘modern’ in having lost many of the endings and in starting to make use of grammatical words. The year 1500 is chosen as the end of the Middle English period because by then most grammatical changes have taken place and the Great Vowel Shift is under way.

An external reason for this date is that printing is introduced. The Early Modern period is difficult to date exactly. It depends on whether we take political events such as the Restoration (of the British monarchy) in 1660, or the Declaration of (US) Independence in 1776, or some other external date to be important.

The year 1700 has been chosen because the spelling is more or less standardized, the Great Vowel Shift is nearly complete, and English speakers start to spread the language around the world.

In this chapter, we explored definitions of English. It can be defined as the language of a group of Germanic tribes after they arrived in Britain. It can also be defined as the grammar and words a speaker knows and uses to construct English sentences.

We also discussed the fact that the structure of Modern English is significantly different from that of Old English and other languages in that English has lost many endings and acquired grammatical words. The reasons for the changes are many but can be divided into two categories: internal and external. Internal causes have to do with linguistic reasons; for example, it is easier to say an apple than a apple. External causes have to do with social, economic, geographical, political, and historical reasons such as migrations and trade contacts and internal cause with the way children (and others) learn a language.

- Now, you could check your understanding by asking yourself 20 questions, ten of them mcqs and the other ten are true or false. It could be beneficial

if you work together by making groups, team work
is good for you.

- Paraphrase the chapter in your own words.

Chapter 4: Indo-European and Germanic

The writer has introduced the term Germanic but have not given an explanation of it. So, what does it mean? First of all, the writer should say that it does not equate to German. German is indeed a Germanic language, but Germanic is the term used to describe a group of languages which share a particular set of characteristics unique to them.

We shall shortly see some examples of this, but here we need only list the more important present-day languages which are of Germanic origin: English, Frisian, Dutch, German, Danish, Norwegian, Icelandic, Faroese, Swedish and, outside Europe, Afrikaans (which is most closely related to Dutch).

I have arranged these languages in an order which, broadly speaking, and ignoring the special case of Afrikaans, shows their relative linguistic closeness to English. But this is not the whole story. For, just as English, German and so on all owe their origins to

Germanic, so Germanic itself belongs to a much larger **language family**. This family is known as **Indo-European**, and to it belong other groups as well as Germanic, including Indic, Greek, Romance, Slavic, Baltic, Celtic and other less well attested groups. The various groupings stretch geographically from the Indian sub-continent to Ireland. Note that this means that the other native languages of the British Isles, Welsh, Irish and Gaelic, are ultimately related to English, although only distantly.

It is probably very difficult to appreciate how similar the wide variety of Indo-European languages are. This is partly simply because the relations we are talking about stem from a period almost 10,000 years ago, and for which we have no direct evidence. The way we overcome this is by searching for what are called **cognate forms**. These are words which share meanings over different languages and which appear to have similar shapes. Thus, if we search for cognates in Sanskrit (an ancient language of India), Greek, Latin and English, we find the following

words for ‘father’:

Sanskrit Greek Latin English

pita[—] pater pater father

Notice that in the first three languages the first consonant is always **p** and the middle one **t**, and we can guess that the final *-r* was somehow lost in Sanskrit.

English looks different, especially in terms of the first consonant.

But if we compare not only ‘father’ with ‘pater’, but also other English and Latin words, such as ‘fee’ and ‘pecus’, or ‘first’ and ‘primus’, ‘foot’ and ‘pedem’, you may be able to see that English **f** often corresponds to Latin **p**. This process, which is called **comparative reconstruction**, is fraught with dangers, but all I want to do here is to give you an idea of what is done.

It is also possible to use comparative reconstruction on more closely related languages, such as the Germanic group. Below I give some examples of cognate forms

from English, Dutch and German, and alongside them I give the corresponding French words:

<i>English</i>	<i>Dutch</i>	<i>German</i>	<i>French</i>
Father	vader	Vater	pere
Foot	voet	Fuss	pied
Tooth	tand	Zahn	dent
Ten	tien	zehn	dix

It will be clear that English and Dutch share much in common, and that German is not hugely different (although the initial consonant **t** has changed to **z**). Of course the reason for this is that all three are Germanic languages. French, on the other hand, is a Romance language, deriving from Latin. Therefore, it is much more distantly related. Note that where English has **f** French has **p**, just like the words for ‘father’ above. You should also be able to work out that there is a further parallel relationship between **d** and English **t**.

The Anglo-Saxon settlement It is likely that the Anglo-Saxons, or more properly, the English (see below),

came from the area of north-west Germany and Denmark, and perhaps also the north-east of the Netherlands, the area known today as Friesland. Indeed, Frisian, still spoken by about 300,000 people in this part of the Netherlands, is the language to which English is most closely related historically.

Despite the story of Hengist and Horsa, when the English came to Britain they did not settle only in Kent. At much the same time they also settled along the east coast south of the Humber, especially in East Anglia. Soon after they spread westwards and northwards, and by the seventh century the English (as they called themselves = Old English *angelcynn*) had settled in almost all of England and southern Scotland, the main exceptions being Cornwall and parts of north-west England.

In other words, these new immigrants to Britain established themselves as the dominant group within two centuries. There is more than one reason why this could happen. It is possible that climatic changes led to

population pressure on the continent, and certainly there were major movements in population throughout central Europe at the time. Since Germanic mercenaries had been in the Roman army the Germanic tribes would have heard about Britain from them as well as others. And the departure of the Romans seems, as Bede indicates, to have left a power vacuum, which the English were easily able to exploit.

1- **The look of Old English**

When studying Old English, the first thing that has to be done is to look at its spelling system or **orthography**. The reason for this will be immediately apparent, for Old English orthography is rather different from that in PDE (present-day English). This is despite the fact that the Anglo-Saxons used basically the same alphabet as we do.

The most obvious difference is that the Anglo-Saxons did not use the following letters: <j, v>, and the following were very rare: <k, q, x, z>. On the other hand, they had several letters which we use either very rarely or not at all:

<a, t, e>. In addition, some Old English letters had a range of usage different (sometimes very different) from that today.

A list of Old English and PDE correspondences is given below:

<i>Old English</i>	<i>PDE</i>
a	a
c c	k, ch
f	f, v
g	g, y
s	s, z
t,	t, th
y	i

In addition, there were several **digraphs**, that is, combinations of two letters to represent a single sound, just like PDE <th> does in ‘thin’.

The Old English digraphs and their PDE correspondences are listed

<i>Old English</i>	<i>PDE</i>
--------------------	------------

cg, gg	dg(e),gg
sc	sh, sk
hw	wh
hr, hl,	hn r, l, n

Of the correspondences, the ones which will give you most difficulty are <c> and <g>, which each have two very distinct values, even when they are part of a digraph. In order to help you distinguish the cases, I shall follow a very common editorial practice and place a dot over <c>, i.e. <c.>, when it corresponds to PDE <ch>. Similarly, when <cg, sc> represent the equivalents of <dg(e), sh> respectively, I shall place the same dot over <g> and <c> when it corresponds to <dg(e), sh>, i.e. <c.g . ,

There can be no doubt that at first sight Old English orthography can be confusing. It certainly adds to the difficulties in studying an unfamiliar language. The differences, however, should not be exaggerated, and often these differences are quite transparent. Here are some examples of Old English words:

drifen hatt g . ear tat lytel ee and here are their PDE equivalents:

driven hat year that little the

One or two spelling conventions which I have not mentioned may cause initial difficulty. For example, the doubling of consonants in *hatt* and the reverse situation in PDE *little* is confusing. Nevertheless, the basic patterns should be easily understood.

Vowels

When we look more closely at vowels, then we quickly come across more serious problems. Whereas today we regularly distinguish between long and short vowels, so that long vowels often (but not always!) have distinctive spellings, such as <**ou, oo, oa, ee, ea**>, in Old English there were no distinctions made between long and short vowels. Editors often distinguish between long and short vowels by placing a dash or **macron** over long vowels, so

that we find *ri[—]se* ‘I rise’ but *risen* ‘risen’. Even with long vowels, however, it is possible to give some guidelines.

Thus, if the Old English spelling is <a[—]>, then respell it as either <oo> or <o> + consonant + <e>, and if the spelling is <u[—]> respell it as <ou>.

Many of the other correspondences can be solved with a little ingenuity. Take, for example, the following sentences:

Hwī[—] stande g.e he[—] r alne dag. amtig.e?

Ta ara[—]s he from tam sle[—]pe

Was he se man in woruldha[—]de g. eseted

If we try only to replace the Old English spellings with corresponding PDE ones, and don’t attempt any translation, then those such as the following should result:

Why stande ye here allne day amtiye

Tha arose he from tham sleep

Was he se man in worulthood yesetted

It is true that for any beginner there are still a number of mysteries, but the number is significantly reduced, to the extent that a plausible attempt at translation may be possible.

It is important to emphasise what we have not done so far, as well as what we have done. I have avoided too specific a discussion of pronunciation, preferring to suggest some relatively straightforward way of respelling Old English to make the relationships between Old English and PDE more transparent. Broadly speaking, the pronunciation of English did not change drastically between Old English and Middle English. Therefore, if you know what Chaucer's pronunciation was like, this will be a good, if approximate, guide to how Old English was pronounced.

People, places and texts

It is necessary to fill in a few more details about Anglo-Saxon England. The consolidation of the settlement is symbolised by what we call the Heptarchy, or the seven kingdoms of Wessex, Essex, Sussex, Kent, East Anglia, Mercia and Northumbria. Whether the Heptarchy represents a reality or a fiction remains up for debate, but the location of these areas suggests that by far the heaviest concentration of settlement was in the south and the east.

Nevertheless, the most powerful area by about 700 was probably Northumbria, where the most important centres were Durham and York. Northumbria had as its arch rival the kingdom of Mercia, whose centre was Lichfield, about twenty miles north of Birmingham. During the next century Mercia gradually became dominant. However, after the first quarter of the ninth century the north and midlands became more and more under Viking attack and the principal southern kingdom, Wessex, began to assume dominance as the only area capable of resisting these attacks. This was particularly true during the reign of

Alfred (871–99), who signed the Treaty of Wedmore. This established peace with the Danes, who controlled the area known as the Danelaw.

One of the best pieces of evidence for the extent of Viking settlement comes from place-names. In areas where the Vikings settled they named places with their own names. These can still be identified today, for example by the use of the suffix *-by*, the Danish word for ‘farm’, and a fairly common Norwegian suffix is *-thwaite* ‘a clearing’.

Thus it would be very difficult to find a more south-westerly example of *-by* than *Rugby* in Warwickshire, and *-thwaite* is virtually restricted to Cumbria (Westmorland and Cumberland) and North Yorkshire (although there is an odd patch of this suffix in East Anglia).

The various patterns of settlement have an enormous influence on the distribution of the texts which survive from the Old English period. The vast majority of texts

come from the southern part of England, especially from the upper Thames valley and around Winchester, the principal town of Wessex. Other major centres include Canterbury, Lichfield, Worcester and Durham. In every case we are talking about texts which are almost all written in ecclesiastical centres.

In this book, as is common in initial studies of Old English, our main focus will be on West Saxon texts, that is to say, on the texts which originate from around the Winchester area. It is customary to divide West Saxon texts into two major groups: Early West Saxon and Late West Saxon.

The texts belonging to the first group were written round about the time of Alfred or just after. In this group there are three fundamental texts: *Pastoral Care*, a translation of a major Christian treatise; the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicles*, or, rather, the parts of the *Chronicles* associated with Alfred; and *Orosius*, again a translation (and rewriting) of a text written by a late Roman historian.

For Late West Saxon the most important texts are those of Alfric, a monk writing at the end of the tenth century. Although Alfric was trained at Winchester, he probably came from further north in Wessex. He wrote a compilation of *Lives of Saints* and a great many homilies. Alfric is particularly important because he obviously took great care in composition, style and language, so that the regularity of his language begins to approach the level of a **standard language**. There is not the degree of standardisation to which we are accustomed in the present day, but there can be no doubt that this was an important factor in the widespread use of West Saxon in many parts of the country.

Present-day textbooks always use West Saxon as their basis for the introduction of Old English, and indeed, given the relative paucity of text from elsewhere, there is no alternative. One important warning, however, must be offered. In the overall history of the language, West Saxon is of only small relevance.

The areas which come to dominate, in particular, the standard language of England today arise principally from the areas of the dialects of the East Midlands and East Anglia, areas for which, unfortunately, there is precious little Old English evidence.

Another complication arises from the fact that the dialects of Early West Saxon and the dialects of Late West Saxon differ in some significant features. Textbook writers, therefore, have made a decision about which form of the language to use when, for example, they present the different forms of nouns, adjectives, pronouns and verbs. In this book I shall use Late West Saxon as the basis for discussion. I do this for several reasons. Firstly, on the grounds of quantity: there is so much more, both of prose and of poetry, which is written in Late West Saxon. Secondly, because that material is more homogenous than any other body of material.

This second point is particularly important for the beginning student, who may not before have encountered historical texts such as those in Old English. For one of the immediate issues that arises is that in such texts there can be a wide variation in the shape of individual forms, even from sentence to sentence, which can cause considerable confusion. At least for Late West Saxon such variation is minimised.

Exercises

- 1- give the PDE equivalents of the following OE words:

ofer mann bedd dag. sc.ip

fisc. asc. te torn ee

eorn hyll tynn cynn miht

- 2- Define each term mentioned in this chapter.

Chapter 5: Latin loans

Evidence for Latin as a language spoken in and around Rome first appeared about 2,500 years ago. As the political influence of Rome grew, so did the importance of Latin, and it spread through most of Europe. Latin also became the language of the Roman Catholic Church.

The influence of Latin on Old English is usually divided into several periods: the influence on Germanic on the continent and in Britain, the influence on Old English before the Middle English period, and the influence during the Renaissance. Possibly 170 words are borrowed on the continent, over 100 in Britain before the Romans left, 150 after the introduction of Christianity, and thousands in the Renaissance period. In the current chapter, we will focus on the earlier periods.

Most of the loans into Old Germanic, Old English, and Middle English are incorporated by changing the Latin

word to sound like a Germanic or English one. After the Middle English period, loans are often introduced into the language without modifying the Latin sounds (except for a few consonants). Early loans also come to us from ‘Vulgar Latin’, a spoken variety of Latin, whereas later loans derive from Classical Latin. Many times, the same word is borrowed twice.

The words borrowed from Latin before 450 and during Old English are commercial, military, religious, and cultural terms, as the small selection of Old English forms (with their modern glosses) in the next table shows, and they are mainly nouns, with some verbs and adjectives.

Some early loans from Latin

candel ‘candle’	catt ‘cat’	scole ‘school’
circul ‘circle’	lilie ‘lily’	socc ‘sock’
synoð ‘synod’	mynet ‘mint, i.e. coin’	win ‘wine’
fefer ‘fever’	sponge ‘sponge’	peru ‘pear’
preost ‘priest’	næp ‘turnip’	finugl ‘fennel’

pipor ‘pepper’	camp ‘battle’	plant ‘plant’
wall ‘wall’	mil ‘mile’	rædic ‘radish’
stræt ‘street’	glesan ‘to gloss’	bete ‘beet’
turnian ‘to turn’	aspendian ‘to spend’	sacc ‘sack’
sicor ‘secure’	fals ‘false’	pin ‘pinetree’
predician ‘to preach’	abbad ‘abbot’	cest ‘chest’
mul ‘mule’	cese ‘cheese’	belt ‘belt’

Benha University

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For First Year Students**

Compiled by

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Benha University

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PART I

A) WHAT IS LITERATURE?

BY ANTHONY BURGESS

What is Literature?¹

The subjects we study at school can be divided roughly into two groups-the sciences and the arts. The sciences include mathematics, geography, chemistry, physics, and so on. Among the arts are drawing, painting, modelling, needlework, drama, music, literature. The purpose of education is to fit us for life in a civilised community, and it seems to follow from the subjects we study that the two most important things in civilised life are Art and Science.

Is this really true? If we take an average day in the life of the average man we seem to see very little evidence of concern with the sciences and the arts. The average man gets up, goes to work, eats his meals, reads the newspapers, watches television, goes to the cinema, goes to bed, sleeps, wakes up, starts all over again. Unless we happen to be professional scientists, laboratory experiments and formulae have ceased to have any meaning for most of us; unless we happen to be poets or painters or musicians-or teachers of literature, painting, and music-the arts seem to us to be only the concern of schoolchildren. And yet people have said, and people still say, that the great glories of our civilisation are the scientists and artists. Ancient Greece is remembered because of mathematicians like Euclid and Pythagoras, because of poets like Homer and dramatists like Sophocles. In two thousand years all our generals and politicians may be forgotten, but Einstein and

¹ Burgess, Anthony. *English Literature: A Survey for Students*. 10th ed. England: Longman Group Ltd., 1974.

Madame Curie and Bernard Shaw and Stravinsky will keep the memory of our age alive.

Why then are the arts and sciences important? I suppose with the sciences we could say that the answer is obvious: we have radium, penicillin, television and recorded sound, motor-cars and aircraft, air-conditioning and central heating. But these achievements have never been the primary intention of science; they are a sort of by-product, the things that emerge only when the scientist has performed his main task. That task is simply stated: to be curious, to keep on asking the question 'Why?' and not to be satisfied till an answer has been found. The scientist is curious about the universe: he wants to know why water boils at one temperature and freezes at another; why cheese is different from chalk; why one person behaves differently from another. Not only 'Why?' but 'What?' What is salt made of? What are the stars? What is the constitution of all matter? The answers to these questions do not necessarily make our lives any easier. The answer to one question-'Can the atom be split?'-has made our lives somewhat harder. But the questions have to be asked. It is man's job to be curious; it is man's job to try to find out the truth about the world about us, to answer the big question 'What is the world really like?'

'The truth about the world about us.' Truth' is a word used in many different ways--'You're not telling the truth.' 'The truth about conditions in Russia.' Beauty is truth, truth beauty.' I want to use it here in the sense of *what lies behind an outward show*. Let me hasten to explain by giving an example. The sun rises in the east and sets in the west. That is what we see; that is the 'outward show'. In the past the outward show was regarded as the truth. But

then a scientist came along to question it and then to announce that the truth was quite different from the appearance: the truth was that the earth revolved and the sun remained still-the outward show was telling a lie. The curious thing about scientific truths like this is that they often seem so useless. It makes no difference to the average man whether the sun moves or the earth moves. He still has to rise at dawn and stop work at dusk. But because a thing is useless it does not mean that it is *valueless*. Scientists still think it worthwhile to pursue truth. They do not expect that laws of gravitation and relativity are going to make much difference to everyday life, but they think it is *a valuable* activity to ask their eternal questions about the universe. And so we say that truth-the thing they are looking for-is *a value*.

A value is something that raises our lives above the purely animal level -the level of getting our food and drink, producing children, sleeping, and dying. This world of getting a living and getting children is sometimes called the world of *subsistence*. A value is something added to the world of subsistence. Some people say that our lives are unsatisfactory because they are mostly concerned with things that are impermanent things that decay and change. Sitting here now, a degree or so above the equator, I look round my hot room and see nothing that will last. It won't be long before my house collapses, eaten by white ants, eroded by rain and wind. The flowers in front of me will be dead tomorrow. My typewriter is already rusty. And so I hunger for something that is permanent, something that will last forever. Truth, I am told, is a thing that will last forever.

Truth is one value. Another is beauty. And here, having talked about the scientist, I turn to the artist. The scientist's concern is truth, the artist's concern is beauty. Now some philosophers tell us that beauty and truth are the same thing. They say there is only one value, one eternal thing which we can call x , and that truth is the name given to it by the scientist and beauty the name given to it by the artist. Let us try to make this clear. There is a substance called salt. If I am a blind man I have to rely on my sense of taste to describe it: salt to me is a substance with a taste which we can only call 'salty'. If I have my eyesight but no sense of taste I have to describe salt as a white crystalline substance. Now both descriptions are correct, but neither is complete in itself. Each description concentrates on *one way of examining salt*. It is possible to say that the scientist examines x in one way, the artist examines it in another. Beauty is one aspect of x , truth is another. But what is x ? Some people call it ultimate reality-the thing that is left when the universe of appearances, of outward show, is removed. Other people call it God, and they say that beauty and truth are two of the qualities of God.

Anyway, both the artist and the scientist are seeking something which they think is real. Their methods are different. The scientist sets his brain to work and, by a slow process of trial and error, after long experiment and enquiry, he finds his answer. This is usually an exciting moment. We remember the story of Archimedes finding his famous principle in the bath and rushing out naked, shouting 'Eureka!' ('I've found it!') The artist wants to make something which will produce just that sort of excitement in the minds of other people-the excitement of discovering something new about x , about reality. He may make a picture, a play, a poem,

or a palace, but he wants to make the people who see or hear or read his creation feel excited and say about it, 'That is beautiful.' Beauty, then, you could define as the quality you find in any object which produces in your mind a special kind of excitement, an excitement somehow tied up with a sense of discovery. It need not be something made by man; a sunset or a bunch of flowers or a tree may make you feel this excitement and utter the word 'Beautiful!' But the primary task of natural things like flowers and trees and the sun is perhaps not to be beautiful but just to exist. The primary task of the artist's creations is to be beautiful.

Let us try to understand a little more about this 'artistic excitement'. First of all, it is what is known as *a static* excitement. It does not make you want to *do* anything. If you call me a fool and various other bad names, I shall get very excited and possibly want to fight you. But the excitement of experiencing beauty leaves one content, as though one has just achieved something. The achievement, as I have already suggested, is the achievement of a discovery. But a discovery of what? I would say the discovery of *a pattern* or the realisation of *order*. Again I must hasten to explain. Life to most of us is just a jumble of sensations, like a very bad film with no plot, no real beginning and end. We are also confused by a great number of contradictions: life is ugly, because people are always trying to kill one another; life is beautiful, because we see plenty of evidence of people trying to be kind to one another. Hitler and Gandhi were both human beings. We see the ugliness of a diseased body and the comeliness of a healthy one; sometimes we say, 'Life is good'; sometimes we say, 'Life is bad'. Which is the true statement? Because we can find no single answer we become confused. A work of art seems to give us the

single answer by seeming to show that there is order or pattern in life. Let me show how this works.

The artist takes raw material and forces or coaxes it into a pattern. If he is a painter he may choose from the world about us various single objects-an apple, a wine-bottle, a table-napkin, a newspaper-and arrange them into a single composition on canvas-what is called a 'still-life'. All these different objects are seen to be part of one pattern, a pattern bounded by the four sides of the picture-frame, and we get satisfaction out of seeing this unity, 2 unity created out of objects which previously seemed to have nothing in common with each other at all. A sculptor will take hard, shapeless stone and force it into the resemblance of a human figure; there unity has been established between completely different things; soft flesh and hard stone, and also between the shapely human figure and the shapeless inhuman rock. The musician takes the sounds produced by scraping a string and blowing down a tube, and he creates order out of them by forcing on them the *shape* of a tune or the order of harmony. The novelist takes incidents from human life and gives them a plot, a beginning and an end-another pattern.

Unity, order, and pattern may be created in other ways too. The poet may bring two completely different things together and make them into a unity by creating a metaphor or simile. T. S. Eliot, a modern poet, takes two completely different pictures-one of the autumn evening, one of a patient in a hospital awaiting an operation - and joins them together like this

let us go then, you and I,
When the evening is laid out against the sky,
Like a patient etherised upon a table.

Beethoven, in his Ninth Symphony, makes the chorus sing about the starry heavens, and accompanies their song with a comic march on bassoons and piccolo. Again, two completely opposed ideas-the sublime and the grotesque-have been brought together and fused into a unity. You see, then, that this excitement we derive from a work of art is mostly the excitement of seeing connections that did not exist before, of seeing quite different aspects of life unified through a pattern.

That is the highest kind of artistic experience. The lowest kind is pure sensation: 'What a beautiful sunset!' means we are overwhelmed by the colour; 'What a beautiful apple-pie!' means that our sense of taste--either now in the act of eating or else in anticipation-is being pleased. Between this kind of experience and the experience of 'patterns' comes another kind: the pleasure of finding an artist able to *express* our feelings for us. The artist finds a means of setting down our emotions-joy, passion, sorrow, regret and, as it were, helps us to *separate* those emotions from ourselves. Let me make this clear. Any strong emotion has to be relieved. When we are happy we shout or dance, when we feel sorrow we want to weep. But the emotion has to be expressed (i.e. pressed out, like juice from a lime). Poets and musicians are especially expert at expressing emotions for us. A death in the family, the loss of money and other calamities are soothed by music and poetry, which seem to find in words or sounds a means of getting the sorrow out of our systems. But, on a higher level, our personal

troubles are relieved when we can be made to see them as part of a pattern, so that here again we have the discovery of unity, of one personal experience being part of a greater whole. We feel that we do not have to bear this sorrow on our own: our sorrow is part of a huge organisation-the universe-and a necessary part of it. And when we discover that a thing is necessary we no longer complain about it.

Our concern is with literature, but the student of literature must always maintain a live interest also in music and painting, sculpture, architecture, film, and theatre. All the arts try to perform the same sort of task, differing only in their methods. Methods are dictated by the sort of material used. There are *spatial* materials-paint, stone, clay-and there are *temporal* materials-words, sounds, dance-steps, stage movements. In other words, some arts work in terms of space, others in terms of time. You can take in a painting or building or piece of sculpture almost immediately, but to listen to a symphony or read a poem takes time-often a lot of time. Thus music and literature have a great deal in common: they both use the temporal material of sounds. Music uses meaningless sounds as raw material; literature uses those meaningful sounds we call words.

Now there are two ways of using words, one artistic, one non-artistic. This means that words themselves can be viewed in two different ways. There is, in fact, the meaning that a word has in the dictionary (what is called the *lexical* meaning or the *denotation*) and the associations that the word has gained through constant use (the *connotations* of the word). Take the word 'mother', for instance. The dictionary definition is designed only to make you

understand what the word means. It means the female parent of an animal. That is denotation. But the word, because we first use it in connection with our own mothers, carries many associations—warmth, security, comfort, love. We feel strongly about our mothers. Because of these associations 'mother' is used in connection with other things about which we are expected to feel strongly our country, our school (thus 'motherland' and 'alma mater', which means 'dear mother'). We say then that 'mother' is rich in connotations. Connotations appeal to the feelings, denotations to the brain. Thus various activities which involve the use of words and are concerned with giving orders or information—the framing of club rules, for instance—will try to restrict words to denotation only. The writer of a science book, the creators of a new constitution for a country—these do not want to appeal to the emotions of the reader, only to his brain, his understanding. They are not writing literature. The writer of literature is much more concerned with the connotations, the ways in which he can make his words move or excite you, the ways in which he can suggest colour or movement or character. The poet, whose work is said to represent the highest form of literature, is most of all concerned with the connotations of words.

Connotations can be likened to the clusters of sounds you hear when you strike a single note on the piano. Strike middle C forcefully and you will hear far more than that one note. You will hear fainter notes rising out of it, notes called harmonics. The note itself is the denotation, the harmonics the connotations.

The writer of literature, especially the poet, differs from the scientist or lawyer in *not restricting* his words. The scientist has to

make his word mean one thing and one thing only, so does the lawyer. But once the word-like our note on the piano-is allowed to vibrate freely, it not only calls up associations but also, at times, suggests other completely different meanings and perhaps even other words. Here is an extreme example

Action calls like a bugle and my heart
Buckles ...

Now what does 'buckle' mean there? We use it to denote the fastening of a belt and also the collapsing of any solid body-sheet metal, a bicycle wheel. Now in a piece of scientific or legal writing the word must have one meaning or the other. But in this fragment of verse we are not so restricted. The word can carry two meanings, can suggest two different things at the same time. So that this passage means: 'I am called to action and I get ready for it: I buckle on my military equipment. But at the same time I am afraid; my heart seems to collapse inside me, like a wheel collapsing when it meets an obstacle.'

This may serve to illustrate how the creator of literature makes his words work overtime. It is not only dictionary meaning that counts-it is sound, suggestion of other meanings, other words, as well as those clusters of harmonics we call connotations. Literature may be defined as words working hard; Literature is the *exploitation of words*.

But literature has different branches, and some branches do more exploiting of words than others. Poetry relies most on the power of words, on their manifold suggestiveness, and in a sense you may say that poetry is the *most literary* of all branches of literature; the most literary because it makes the greatest use of the raw material

of literature, which is words. Once upon a time, the only kind of literature that existed was poetry; prose was used merely for jotting down laws and records and scientific theories. With the ancient Greeks, poetry had three departments-lyric, dramatic, and epic. In lyrical poetry the author was concerned with expressing certain emotions-love, hate, pity, fear-relying all the time on the power of his words. In dramatic poetry (or plays) he did not have to rely quite so much on words (although Greek drama was packed with lyrical poems) because there was action, a plot, human character. In epic poetry he could tell a tale-again making use of character and action and there perhaps his skill as a narrator and his constructive power would be more important than the suggestive qualities of words.

We still have these three ancient divisions, but two of them are no longer-except very occasionally-presented in the form of poetry. The epic has become the novel, written in prose. (Sometimes people still write novels in verse, but they are not very popular.) The dramatic poem has become the film or the play (only rarely in verse nowadays). Lyrical poetry is the only kind of poetry left. In other words there is very little room for the epic poet or the dramatic poet nowadays: the poet, as opposed to the playwright or the novelist, writes short lyrical poems, publishes them in magazines, and does not expect to make much money out of them. There is no living poet who can make a living out of his poetry. This is a bad sign and perhaps means that there is no future for poetry. But this is something we can discuss later.

There are other branches of literature and 'near-literature' which we shall consider in this book, particularly the essay, which is what

a man writes when he has no gift for poetry or the novel. But I should like you to keep those three main forms in mind-the novel, the drama, the poem -for they are the forms which have attracted our greatest names during the last few centuries. In our own age it seems likely that only the novel will survive as a literary form. There are few readers of poetry, and most people prefer to enjoy drama in the form of the film (a visual form, not a literary form). But before we come to the problems of the present we have a good deal to learn about the past, and the past of English Literature is the subject of the pages that follow.

PART II

DIFFERENCES AND SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE MAIN LITERARY GENRES

The difference between fiction and nonfiction

The difference between fiction and nonfiction can mainly be summarized in the following table:

Basis of Distinction	Fiction	Non Fiction
Definition	The literature in the form of prose, especially novels, that describes imaginary events and people.	A prose writing that is informative or factual rather than fictional.
Nature	The smallest category in literature.	Biggest class in literature.
Types	Literature Fiction, Urban Fiction, Westerns, Women's fiction, Workplace tell-all. General cross-genre. Historical romance.	Biography, business, cooking, health, and fitness, pets, crafts, home decorating, languages, travel, home improvement, religion, art and music, history, self-help, true crime, science, and humor.
Distinction	Characters, storyline, and places do not exist in reality.	Characters, storyline, and locations get based on reality.
Examples	<i>The Hunger Games</i> by Suzanne Collins, <i>The Da Vinci Code</i> by Dan Brown, <i>The Catcher in the Rye</i> by J.D. Salinger.	<i>The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks</i> by Rebecca Skloot, <i>Bossypants</i> by Tina Fey, <i>Into the Wild</i> by Jon Krakauer.

Major differences between poetry, novel and drama:²

The main difference between the different forms of literature is the purpose and the way words are arranged.

The main difference between prose and poetry is how the words are used. In prose we form words into sentences and paragraphs. In poetry we form words into lines and stanzas. Many of the rules of punctuation and grammar apply to poetry, but the poet can choose to change them as he or she wishes. Here is an example from E.E. Cummings.

somewhere i have never travelled,gladly beyond
any experience,your eyes have their silence:
in your most frail gesture are things which enclose
me,
or which I cannot touch because they are too near

You can see that the poet uses words differently than typical sentences. He does not capitalize, and does not even put spaces between the words (“travelled,gladly”). By doing this, he reinforces the tone and message of his poem, about the facts of life.

Poetry speaks directly to emotions. It seeks to eliminate as many barriers as possible between the poem and the reader. There is a little more distance in prose. Prose consists of novels and drama. It is basically writing like human speech.

² <https://www.enotes.com/homework-help/define-novel-drama-poetry-criticism-prose-437858> , https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_literary_genres , <https://www.enotes.com/topics/traveled-beyond/etext>

The difference between drama and novels is the purpose and the structure. Drama is written to be performed. It can consist of prose or be more like poetry, such as Shakespeare. It is composed of stage directions, speaker tags, and lines. Here is an example from the play *The Diary of Anne Frank*.

Miep. Are you all right, Mr. Frank?

Mr. Frank (*quickly controlling himself*). Yes, Miep, yes.

Miep. Everyone in the office has gone home. . . . It's after six. (*Then, pleading*) Don't stay up here, Mr. Frank. What's the use of torturing yourself like this? (Act 1, Scene 1)

A play is meant to be performed, and not just read. The stage directions tell the actors what to do, but also describe the action of the play and how the lines will be delivered.

A novel, on the other hand, is a story written in paragraphs. It includes the narration, as well as dialogue. Here is an example from *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

"Teach me?" I said in surprise. "He hasn't taught me anything, Miss Caroline. Atticus ain't got time to teach me anything," I added, when Miss Caroline smiled and shook her head. "Why, he's so tired at night he just sits in the livingroom and reads." (Ch. 2)

This excerpt shows dialogue, action, and how the character felt. By using this genre, we can tell a fuller story than poetry or drama. There is more detail, and characters and events are more fleshed-out. This genre is more character driven, where drama is more plot driven and characterization is accomplished through action.

The writers of each genre are termed differently, although they can all be referred to as authors or writers; some prefer to make a clear distinction between them. This can be seen in the following table:

The writers of each genre		
Poetry	Novel	Drama
Poet	Novelist	Dramatist/ Playwright

What is the difference between novel and drama?³

Key difference: Drama is essentially written to be performed. In a drama, people, things, events, must be present through a dialogue. A **novel**, on the other hand, is a story written to be read, as opposed to be performed.

In the literary sense, the term ‘drama’ has two meanings. One is a genre of literature; the other is similar to a play. *Dictionary.com* defines drama as “a composition in prose or verse presenting in dialogue or pantomime a story involving conflict or contrast of character, especially one intended to be acted on the stage.”

Drama is the specific way that the work is written. In a drama, people, things, events, must be present through a dialogue. The term drama comes from the Greek word, ‘δρᾶμα’ (drama), which means ‘action.’ The word is actually derived from the verb ‘to do’ or ‘to act.’ Drama is essentially written to be performed. In fact, it can even be said that a drama is a type of play. Drama has such

³ <http://www.differencebetween.info/difference-between-drama-and-novel>

types as tragedy, comedy, tragi-comedy, farce, melodrama, etc. It may even include songs, such as an opera.

A novel, on the other hand, is a story written to be read, as opposed to be performed. *Dictionary.com* defines a novel, as ‘a fictitious prose narrative of considerable length and complexity, portraying characters and usually presenting a sequential organization of action and scenes.’ A novel has such types as mysteries, romances, thrillers, science fiction, fantasies, historical novels, gothic novels, etc.

Essentially, a novel is a story written with a start, middle and end. The novel can be written in first person or in third person. It may have dialogues, or the events happening may be described. People, events and thoughts can be described, whereas this is not in possible in a drama. In a drama, only the dialogues are said, everything must be referenced to in the dialogue or not at all.

Let’s compare one scene as written in a novel and in a drama:

Novel:

Celia and Olivia walked through the different rows of flowers. Coming upon a rose bush, Celia bend down to pluck a rose. Turning around she presented the rose to Olivia, while exclaiming, “The beauty of this rose is just like you, Olivia.” As Olivia took the rose from Celia, she pricked her finger on one of the many thorns on the stem.

Drama:

[Celia and Olivia enter stage right]

Olivia: Look at all these beautiful flowers.

Celia: Look at that rose bush. Isn't this rose beautiful?
{Giving the rose to Olivia} The beauty of this rose is just like you, Olivia.
Olivia: Ouch, I pricked my finger.

In other words, it can be concluded that the main difference between a novel and a drama is derived from the formatting of each piece. A novel is generally written in basic prose while a drama is almost exclusively written in dialogue. Both types of work have similar story elements such as characters, plot, settings, etc. Each work creates these elements through different techniques. A novel is far more straight forward than a drama. In a novel, we often have a lot of extraneous information provided for us. The descriptions of both characters and settings are much more apple and vivid. In a drama, we must imply and infer much of what we learn about characters and settings. There is no room in the drama format for lengthy explanations. We must learn about the characters as they communicate and interact rather than learning about them through an author's description.

The differences between poetry, novel and drama can mainly be summarized in the following table:

Distinction	Poetry	Novel	Drama
Writer	Poet	Novelist	Playwright/ Dramatist
Medium	Verse	Prose	Prose/ Verse
Form	Lines & stanzas	Sentences and paragraphs	Dialogue (whether in prose or verse)
Elements	Tone, rhyme, rhythm, mood, figures of speech, etc.	characters, plot, settings, themes, narration, etc.	Characters, plot, settings, themes, costumes, speaker tags, stage directions, dialogue, etc.
Length	Could be short or long	The lengthiest literary genre	Usually medium length
Purpose	Appeals to the emotions	Written mainly to be read	Written to be performed on a stage

PART III

A) THE HARVARD CLASSICS: INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

The Harvard Classics⁴. 1909–14.

Introduction to the History of English Literature

Hippolyte Adolphe Taine

HISTORY has undergone a transformation owing to a study of literatures...The discovery has been made that a literary work is not a mere play of the imagination, the isolated caprice of an excited brain, but a transcript of contemporary manners and customs and the sign of a particular state of intellect. The conclusion derived from this is that, through literary monuments, we can retrace the way in which men felt and thought many centuries ago.

We have meditated over these ways of feeling and thinking and have accepted them as facts of prime significance. We have found that they were dependent on most important events, that they explain these, and that these explain them, and that henceforth it was necessary to give them their place in history, and one of the highest.

It is a mistake to study the document as if it existed alone by itself...At bottom mythologies and languages are not existences; the only realities are human beings who have employed words and imagery adapted to their organs and to suit the original cast of their intellects. A creed is nothing in itself. Who made it? Look at this or that portrait of the sixteenth century, the stern, energetic features of an archbishop or of an English martyr. Nothing exists except through the individual; it is necessary to know the individual

⁴ <http://www.bartleby.com/39/47.html>

himself. Let the parentage of creeds be established, or the classification of poems, or the growth of constitutions, or the transformations of idioms, and we have only cleared the ground. True history begins when the historian has discerned beyond the mists of ages the living, active man, endowed with passions, furnished with habits, special in voice, feature, gesture and costume, distinctive and complete, like anybody that you have just encountered in the street.

A language, a law, a creed, is never other than an abstraction; the perfect thing is found in the active man, the visible corporeal figure which eats, walks, fights, and labors. Set aside the theories of constitutions and their results, of religions and their systems, and try to observe men in their workshops or offices, in their fields along with their own sky and soil, with their own homes, clothes, occupations and repasts, just as you see them when, on landing in England or in Italy, you remark their features and gestures, their roads and their inns, the citizen on his promenades and the workman taking a drink. Let us strive as much as possible to supply the place of the actual, personal, sensible observation that is no longer practicable, this being the only way in which we can really know the man; let us make the past present; to judge of an object it must be present; no experience can be had of what is absent. Undoubtedly, this sort of reconstruction is always imperfect; only an imperfect judgment can be based on it; but let us do the best we can; incomplete knowledge is better than none at all, or than knowledge which is erroneous, and there is no other way of obtaining knowledge approximatively of bygone times than by *seeing* approximatively the men of former times.

Such is the first step in history... We now come to the second step... On observing the visible man with your own eyes what do you try to find in him? The invisible man. These words which your ears catch, those gestures, those airs of the head, his attire and sensible operations of all kinds, are, for you, merely so many expressions; these express something, a soul. An inward man is hidden beneath the outward man, and the latter simply manifests the former... Behold a new world, an infinite world; for each visible action involves an infinite train of reasonings and emotions, new or old sensations which have combined to bring this into light and which, like long ledges of rock sunk deep in the earth, have cropped out above the surface and attained their level. It is this subterranean world which forms the second aim, the special object of the historian. If his critical education suffices, he is able to discriminate under every ornament in architecture, under every stroke of the brush in a picture, under each phrase of literary composition, the particular sentiment out of which the ornament, the stroke, and the phrase have sprung; he is a spectator of the inward drama which has developed itself in the breast of the artist or writer; the choice of words, the length or shortness of the period, the species of metaphor, the accent of a verse, the chain of reasoning—all are to him an indication; while his eyes are reading the text his mind and soul are following the steady flow and ever-changing series of emotions and conceptions from which this text has issued; he is working out its *psychology*...

Such is the second step, and we are now in train to follow it out. Such is the proper aim of contemporary criticism...After having observed in a man and noted down one, two, three, and then a multitude of, sentiments, do these suffice and does your knowledge of him seem complete? Does a

memorandum book constitute a psychology? It is not a psychology, and here, as elsewhere, the search for causes must follow the collection of facts. It matters not what the facts may be, whether physical or moral, they always spring from causes... We must therefore try to ascertain what simple facts underlie moral qualities the same as we ascertain those that underlie physical qualities... Here we reach what is deepest in man; for, to explain this conception, we must consider the race he belongs to, say the German, the Northman, the formation and character of his intellect, his ways in general of thinking and feeling, that tardiness and frigidity of sensation which keeps him from rashly and easily falling under the empire of sensual enjoyments, that bluntness of taste, that irregularity and those outbursts of conception which arrest in him the birth of refined and harmonious forms and methods; that disdain of appearances, that yearning for truth, that attachment to abstract, bare ideas which develop conscience in him at the expense of everything else. Here the search comes to an end. We have reached a certain primitive disposition, a particular trait belonging to sensations of all kinds, to every conception peculiar to an age or to a race, to characteristics inseparable from every idea and feeling that stir in the human breast. Such are the grand causes, for these are universal and permanent causes, present in every case and at every moment, everywhere and always active, indestructible, and inevitably dominant in the end, since, whatever accidents cross their path being limited and partial, end in yielding to the obscure and incessant repetition of their energy; so that the general structure of things and all the main features of events are their work, all religions and philosophies, all poetic and industrial systems, all forms of society and of the family, all, in fine, being imprints bearing the stamp of their seal.

There is, then, a system in human ideas and sentiments, the prime motor of which consists in general traits, certain characteristics of thought and feeling common to men belonging to a particular race, epoch, or country. Just as crystals in mineralogy, whatever their diversity, proceed from a few simple physical forms, so do civilizations in history, however these may differ, proceed from a few spiritual forms... At all events, the mechanism of human history is like this. We always find the primitive mainspring consisting of some widespread tendency of soul and intellect, either innate and natural to the race or acquired by it and due to some circumstance forced upon it. These great given mainsprings gradually produce their effects, that is to say, at the end of a few centuries they place the nation in a new religious, literary, social, and economic state; a new condition which, combined with their renewed effort, produces another condition, sometimes a good one, sometimes a bad one, now slowly, now rapidly, and so on; so that the entire development of each distinct civilization may be considered as the effect of one permanent force which, at every moment, varies its work by modifying the circumstances where it acts.

Three different sources contribute to the production of this elementary moral state, *race, epoch, and environment*. What we call *race* consists of those innate and hereditary dispositions which man brings with him into the world and which are generally accompanied with marked differences of temperament and of bodily structure. They vary in different nations...

When we have thus verified the internal structure of a race we must consider the *environment* in which it lives. For man is not alone in the world; nature envelops him and other men surround

him; accidental and secondary folds come and overspread the primitive and permanent fold, while physical or social circumstances derange or complete the natural groundwork surrendered to them. At one time climate has had its effect...

There is, nevertheless, a third order of causes, for, with the forces within and without, there is the work these have already produced together, which work itself contributes toward producing the ensuing work; beside the permanent impulsion and the given environment there is the acquired momentum... Now, if you no longer regard a brief moment, as above, but one of those grand periods of development which embraces one or many centuries like the Middle Ages, or our last classic period, the conclusion is the same. A certain dominating conception has prevailed throughout; mankind, during two hundred years, during five hundred years, have represented to themselves a certain ideal figure of man, in mediæval times the knight and the monk, in our classic period the courtier and refined talker; this creative and universal conception has monopolized the entire field of action and thought, and, after spreading its involuntary systematic works over the world, it languished and then died out, and now a new idea has arisen, destined to a like domination and to equally multiplied creations. Note here that the latter depends in part on the former, and that it is the former, which, combining its effect with those of national genius and surrounding circumstances, will impose their bent and their direction on new-born things. It is according to this law that great historic currents are formed, meaning by this, the long rule of a form of intellect or of a master idea, like that period of spontaneous creations called the Renaissance, or that period of oratorical classifications called the Classic Age, or that series of mystic systems called the

Alexandrine and Christian epoch, or that series of mythological efflorescences found at the origins of Germany, India, and Greece. Here as elsewhere, we are dealing merely with a mechanical problem: the total effect is a compound wholly determined by the grandeur and direction of the forces which produce it. The sole difference which separates these moral problems from physical problems lies in this, that in the former the directions and grandeur cannot be estimated by or stated in figures with the same precision as in the latter...

There remains to be ascertained in what way these causes, applied to a nation or to a century, distribute their effects... in preparing the psychological map of the events and sentiments belonging to a certain human civilization, we find at the start five or six well determined provinces—religion, art, philosophy (the three principal products of human intelligence), industries, the state, and the family (the two leading products of human association); next, in each of these provinces, natural departments, and then finally, in each of these departments, still smaller territories until we arrive at those countless details of life which we observe daily in ourselves and around us...

A civilization is a living unit, the parts of which hold together the same as the parts of an organic body... The regulation in a civilization consists in the presence in each great human creation of an elementary product equally present in other surrounding creations, that is, some faculty and aptitude, some efficient and marked disposition, which, with its own peculiar character, introduces this with that into all operations in which it takes part, and which, according to its variations, causes variation in all the works in which it cooperates.

Having reached this point we can obtain a glimpse of the principal features of human transformations, and can now search for the general laws which regulate not only events, but classes of events; not only this religion or that literature, but the whole group of religions or of literatures... We can confidently state under what circumstances it will reappear, foretell without rashness many portions of its future history, and sketch with precaution some of the traits of its ulterior development.

History has reached this point at the present day, or rather it is nearly there, on the threshold of this inquest. The question as now stated is this: Given a literature, a philosophy, a society, an art, a certain group of arts, what is the moral state of things which produces it? And what are the conditions of race, epoch, and environment the best adapted to produce this moral state? There is a distinct moral state for each of these formations and for each of their branches; there is one for art in general as well as for each particular art; for architecture, painting, sculpture, music, and poetry, each with a germ of its own in the large field of human psychology; each has its own law, and it is by virtue of this law that we see each shoot up, apparently haphazard, singly and alone, amidst the miscarriages of their neighbors, like painting in Flanders and Holland in the seventeenth century, like poetry in England in the sixteenth century, like music in Germany in the eighteenth century. At this moment, and in these countries, the conditions for one art and not for the others are fulfilled, and one branch only has bloomed out amidst the general sterility. It is these laws of human vegetation which history must now search for; it is this special psychology of each special formation which must be got at; it is the composition of a complete table of these peculiar

conditions that must now be worked out. There is nothing more delicate and nothing more difficult. Montesquieu undertook it, but in his day the interest in history was too recent for him to be successful; nobody, indeed, had any idea of the road that was to be followed, and even at the present day we scarcely begin to obtain a glimpse of it.

Just as astronomy, at bottom, is a mechanical problem, and physiology, likewise, a chemical problem, so is history, at bottom, a *problem of psychology*. There is a particular system of inner impressions and operations which fashions the artist, the believer, the musician, the painter, the nomad, the social man; for each of these, the filiation, intensity, and interdependence of ideas and of emotions are different; each has his own moral history, and his own special organization, along with some master tendency and with some dominant trait... Nobody has taught one better how to observe with one's own eyes, first, to regard humanity around us and life as it is, and next, old and authentic documents; how to read more than merely the black and white of the page; how to detect under old print and the scrawl of the text the veritable sentiment and the train of thought, the mental state in which the words were penned. In his writings, as in those of Sainte-Beuve and in those of the German critics, the reader will find how much is to be derived from a literary document; if this document is rich and we know how to interpret it, we will find in the psychology of a particular soul, often that of an age, and sometimes that of a race. In this respect, a great poem, a good novel, the confessions of a superior man, are more instructive than a mass of historians and histories; I would give fifty volumes of charters and a hundred diplomatic files for the memoirs of Cellini, the epistles of Saint Paul, the table-talk of Luther, or the comedies of Aristophanes.

Herein lies the value of literary productions. They are instructive because they are beautiful; their usefulness increases with their perfection; and if they provide us with documents, it is because they are monuments. The more visible a book renders sentiments the more literary it is, for it is the special office of literature to take note of sentiments. The more important the sentiments noted in a book the higher its rank in literature, for it is by representing what sort of a life a nation or an epoch leads, that a writer rallies to himself the sympathies of a nation or of an epoch. Hence, among the documents which bring before our eyes the sentiments of preceding generations, a literature, and especially a great literature, is incomparably the best...

I have undertaken to write a history of a literature and to ascertain the psychology of a people; in selecting this one, it is not without a motive. A people had to be taken possessing a vast and complete literature, which is rarely found. There are few nations which, throughout their existence, have thought and written well in the full sense of the word. Among the ancients, Latin literature is null at the beginning, and afterward borrowed and an imitation. Among the moderns, German literature is nearly a blank for two centuries. Italian and Spanish literatures come to an end in the middle of the seventeenth century. Ancient Greece, and modern France and England, alone offer a complete series of great and expressive monuments. I have chosen the English because, as this still exists and is open to direct observation, it can be better studied than that of an extinct civilization of which fragments only remain; and because, being different, it offers better than that of France very marked characteristics in the eyes of a Frenchman. Moreover, outside of what is peculiar to English civilization, apart from a spontaneous development, it presents a forced deviation due to the

latest and most effective conquest to which the country was subject; the three given conditions out of which it issues—race, climate, and the Norman conquest—are clearly and distinctly visible in its literary monuments; so that we study in this history the two most potent motors of human transformation, namely, nature and constraint, and we study them, without any break or uncertainty, in a series of authentic and complete monuments. I have tried to define these primitive motors, to show their gradual effects, and explain how their insensible operation has brought religious and literary productions into full light, and how the inward mechanism is developed by which the barbarous Saxon became the Englishman of the present day.

PART IV

**B) A HISTORY OF ENGLISH
LITERATURE BY ROBERT
HUNTINGTON FLETCHER**

A History of English Literature⁵

By Robert Huntington Fletcher

TWO ASPECTS OF LITERARY STUDY. Such a study of Literature as that for which the present book is designed includes two purposes, contributing to a common end. In the first place (I), the student must gain some general knowledge of the conditions out of which English literature has come into being, as a whole and during its successive periods, that is of the external facts of one sort or another without which it cannot be understood. This means chiefly (1) tracing in a general way, from period to period, the social life of the nation, and (2) getting some acquaintance with the lives of the more important authors. The principal thing, however (II), is the direct study of the literature itself. This study in turn should aim first at an understanding of the literature as an expression of the authors' views of life and of their personalities and especially as a portrayal and interpretation of the life of their periods and of all life as they have seen it; it should aim further at an appreciation of each literary work as a product of Fine Art, appealing with peculiar power both to our minds and to our emotions, not least to the sense of Beauty and the whole higher nature. In the present book, it should perhaps be added, the word Literature is generally interpreted in the strict sense, as including only writing of permanent significance and beauty.

The outline discussion of literary qualities which follows is intended to help in the formation of intelligent and appreciative judgments.

⁵ Fletcher, Robert Huntington. *A History of English Literature*. Blackmask Online. 2002, Pp.2-6.

SUBSTANCE AND FORM. The most thoroughgoing of all distinctions in literature, as in the other Fine Arts, is that between (1) Substance, the essential content and meaning of the work, and (2) Form, the manner in which it is expressed (including narrative structure, external style, in poetry verse-form, and many related matters). This distinction should be kept in mind, but in what follows it will not be to our purpose to emphasize it.

GENERAL MATTERS. 1. First and always in considering any piece of literature a student should ask himself the question already implied: Does it present a true portrayal of life—of the permanent elements in all life and in human nature, of the life or thought of its own particular period, and (in most sorts of books) of the persons, real or imaginary, with whom it deals? If it properly accomplishes this main purpose, when the reader finishes it he should feel that his understanding of life and of people has been increased and broadened. But it should always be remembered that truth is quite as much a matter of general spirit and impression as of literal accuracy in details of fact. The essential question is not, Is the presentation of life and character perfect in a photographic fashion? but Does it convey the underlying realities? 2. Other things being equal, the value of a book, and especially of an author's whole work, is proportional to its range, that is to the breadth and variety of the life and characters which it presents. 3. A student should not form his judgments merely from what is technically called the dogmatic point of view, but should try rather to adopt that of historical criticism. This means that he should take into account the limitations imposed on every author by the age in which he lived. If you find that the poets of the Anglo-Saxon 'Beowulf' have given a clear and interesting picture of the life of our barbarous ancestors of the sixth or seventh century A. D., you

should not blame them for a lack of the finer elements of feeling and expression which after a thousand years of civilization distinguish such delicate spirits as Keats and Tennyson. 4. It is often important to consider also whether the author's personal method is objective, which means that he presents life and character without bias; or subjective, coloring his work with his personal tastes, feelings and impressions. Subjectivity may be a falsifying influence, but it may also be an important virtue, adding intimacy, charm, or force. 5. Further, one may ask whether the author has a deliberately formed theory of life; and if so how it shows itself, and, of course, how sound it is.

INTELLECT, EMOTION, IMAGINATION, AND RELATED QUALITIES. Another main question in judging any book concerns the union which it shows: (1) of the Intellectual faculty, that which enables the author to understand and control his material and present it with directness and clearness; and (2) of the Emotion, which gives warmth, enthusiasm, and appealing human power. The relative proportions of these two faculties vary greatly in books of different sorts. Exposition (as in most essays) cannot as a rule be permeated with so much emotion as narration or, certainly, as lyric poetry. In a great book the relation of the two faculties will of course properly correspond to form and spirit. Largely a matter of Emotion is the Personal Sympathy of the author for his characters, while Intellect has a large share in Dramatic Sympathy, whereby the author enters truly into the situations and feelings of any character, whether he personally likes him or not. Largely made up of Emotion are: (1) true Sentiment, which is fine feeling of any sort, and which should not degenerate into Sentimentalism (exaggerated tender feeling); (2) Humor, the instinctive sense for that which is amusing; and (3) the

sense for Pathos. Pathos differs from Tragedy in that Tragedy (whether in a drama or elsewhere) is the suffering of persons who are able to struggle against it, Pathos the suffering of those persons (children, for instance) who are merely helpless victims. Wit, the brilliant perception of incongruities, is a matter of Intellect and the complement of Humor.

IMAGINATION AND FANCY. Related to Emotion also and one of the most necessary elements in the higher forms of literature is Imagination, the faculty of making what is absent or unreal seem present and real, and revealing the hidden or more subtle forces of life. Its main operations may be classified under three heads: (1) Pictorial and Presentative. It presents to the author's mind, and through him to the minds of his readers, all the elements of human experience and life (drawing from his actual experience or his reading). 2. Selective, Associative, and Constructive. From the unorganized material thus brought clearly to the author's consciousness Imagination next selects the details which can be turned to present use, and proceeds to combine them, uniting scattered traits and incidents, perhaps from widely different sources, into new characters, stories, scenes, and ideas. The characters of 'Silas Marner,' for example, never had an actual existence, and the precise incidents of the story never took place in just that order and fashion, but they were all constructed by the author's imagination out of what she had observed of many real persons and events, and so make, in the most significant sense, a true picture of life. 3. Penetrative and Interpretative. In its subtlest operations, further, Imagination penetrates below the surface and comprehends and brings to light the deeper forces and facts—the real controlling instincts of characters, the real motives for actions,

and the relations of material things to those of the spiritual world and of Man to Nature and God.

Fancy may for convenience be considered as a distinct faculty, though it is really the lighter, partly superficial, aspect of Imagination. It deals with things not essentially or significantly true, amusing us with striking or pleasing suggestions, such as seeing faces in the clouds, which vanish almost as soon as they are discerned. Both Imagination and Fancy naturally express themselves, often and effectively, through the use of metaphors, similes, and suggestive condensed language. In painful contrast to them stands commonplaceness, always a fatal fault.

IDEALISM, ROMANCE, AND REALISM. Among the most important literary qualities also are Idealism, Romance, and Realism. Realism, in the broad sense, means simply the presentation of the actual, depicting life as one sees it, objectively, without such selection as aims deliberately to emphasize some particular aspects, such as the pleasant or attractive ones. (Of course all literature is necessarily based on the ordinary facts of life, which we may call by the more general name of Reality.) Carried to the extreme, Realism may become ignoble, dealing too frankly or in unworthy spirit with the baser side of reality, and in almost all ages this sort of Realism has actually attempted to assert itself in literature. Idealism, the tendency opposite to Realism, seeks to emphasize the spiritual and other higher elements, often to bring out the spiritual values which lie beneath the surface. It is an optimistic interpretation of life, looking for what is good and permanent beneath all the surface confusion. Romance may be called Idealism in the realm of sentiment. It aims largely to interest and delight, to throw over life a pleasing glamor; it generally deals

with love or heroic adventure; and it generally locates its scenes and characters in distant times and places, where it can work unhampered by our consciousness of the humdrum actualities of our daily experience. It may always be asked whether a writer of Romance makes his world seem convincingly real as we read or whether he frankly abandons all plausibility. The presence or absence of a supernatural element generally makes an important difference. Entitled to special mention, also, is spiritual Romance, where attention is centered not on external events, which may here be treated in somewhat shadowy fashion, but on the deeper questions of life. Spiritual Romance, therefore, is essentially idealistic.

DRAMATIC POWER. Dramatic power, in general, means the presentation of life with the vivid active reality of life and character which especially distinguishes the acted drama. It is, of course, one of the main things to be desired in most narrative; though sometimes the effect sought may be something different, as, for instance, in romance and poetry, an atmosphere of dreamy beauty. In a drama, and to some extent in other forms of narrative, dramatic power culminates in the ability to bring out the great crises with supreme effectiveness.

CHARACTERS. There is, generally speaking, no greater test of an author's skill than his knowledge and presentation of characters. We should consider whether he makes them (1) merely caricatures, or (2) type characters, standing for certain general traits of human nature but not convincingly real or especially significant persons, or (3) genuine individuals with all the inconsistencies and half-revealed tendencies that in actual life belong to real personality. Of course in the case of important

characters, the greater the genuine individuality the greater the success. But with secondary characters the principles of emphasis and proportion generally forbid very distinct individualization; and sometimes, especially in comedy (drama), truth of character is properly sacrificed to other objects, such as the main effect. It may also be asked whether the characters are simple, as some people are in actual life, or complex, like most interesting persons; whether they develop, as all real people must under the action of significant experience, or whether the author merely presents them in brief situations or lacks the power to make them anything but stationary. If there are several of them it is a further question whether the author properly contrasts them in such a way as to secure interest. And a main requisite is that he shall properly motivate their actions, that is make their actions result naturally from their characters, either their controlling traits or their temporary impulses.

STRUCTURE. In any work of literature there should be definite structure. This requires, (1) Unity, (2) Variety, (3) Order, (4) Proportion, and (5) due Emphasis of parts. Unity means that everything included in the work ought to contribute directly or indirectly to the main effect. Very often a definite theme may be found about which the whole work centers, as for instance in 'Macbeth,' The Ruin of a Man through Yielding to Evil. Sometimes, however, as in a lyric poem, the effect intended may be the rendering or creation of a mood, such as that of happy content, and in that case the poem may not have an easily expressible concrete theme.

Order implies a proper beginning, arrangement, progress, and a definite ending. In narrative, including all stories whether in

prose or verse and also the drama, there should be traceable a Line of Action, comprising generally: (1) an Introduction, stating the necessary preliminaries; (2) the Initial Impulse, the event which really sets in motion this particular story; (3) a Rising Action; (4) a Main Climax. Sometimes (generally, in Comedy) the Main Climax is identical with the Outcome; sometimes (regularly in Tragedy) the Main Climax is a turning point and comes near the middle of the story. In that case it really marks the beginning of the success of the side which is to be victorious at the end (in Tragedy the side opposed to the hero) and it initiates (5) a Falling Action, corresponding to the Rising Action, and sometimes of much the same length, wherein the losing side struggles to maintain itself. After (6) the Outcome, may come (7) a brief tranquilizing Conclusion. The Antecedent Action is that part of the characters' experiences which precedes the events of the story. If it has a bearing, information about it must be given either in the Introduction or incidentally later on. Sometimes, however, the structure just indicated may not be followed; a story may begin in the middle, and the earlier part may be told later on in retrospect, or incidentally indicated, like the Antecedent Action.

If in any narrative there is one or more Secondary Action, a story which might be separated from the Main Action and viewed as complete in itself, criticism should always ask whether the Main and Secondary Actions are properly unified. In the strictest theory there should be an essential connection between them; for instance, they may illustrate different and perhaps contrasting aspects of the general theme. Often, however, an author introduces a Secondary Action merely for the sake of variety or to increase the breadth of his picture—in order to present a whole section of society instead of one narrow stratum or group. In such cases, he

must generally be judged to have succeeded if he has established an apparent unity, say by mingling the same characters in the two actions, so that readers are not readily conscious of the lack of real structural unity.

Other things to be considered in narrative are: Movement, which, unless for special reasons, should be rapid, at least not slow and broken; Suspense; general Interest; and the questions whether or not there are good situations and good minor climaxes, contributing to the interest; and whether or not motivation is good, apart from that which results from character, that is whether events are properly represented as happening in accordance with the law of cause and effect which inexorably governs actual life. But it must always be remembered that in such writing as Comedy and Romance the strict rules of motivation must be relaxed, and indeed in all literature, even in Tragedy, the idealization, condensation, and heightening which are the proper methods of Art require them to be slightly modified.

DESCRIPTIVE POWER. Usually secondary in appearance but of vital artistic importance, is the author's power of description, of picturing both the appearance of his characters and the scenes which make his background and help to give the tone of his work. Perhaps four subjects of description may be distinguished: 1. External Nature. Here such questions as the following are of varying importance, according to the character and purpose of the work: Does the author know and care for Nature and frequently introduce descriptions? Are the descriptions concrete and accurate, or on the other hand purposely general (impressionistic) or carelessly superficial? Do they give fine variations of appearance and impression, such as delicate shiftings of light and

shade and delicate tones of color? Are they powerfully sensuous, that is do they appeal strongly to the physical senses, of sight (color, light, and movement), sound (including music), smell, taste, touch, and general physical sensation? How great is their variety? Do they deal with many parts of Nature, for example the sea, mountains, plains, forests, and clouds? Is the love of external beauty a passion with the author? What is the author's attitude toward Nature—(1) does he view Nature in a purely objective way, as a mass of material things, a series of material phenomena or a mere embodiment of sensuous beauty; or (2) is there symbolism or mysticism in his attitude, that is—does he view Nature with awe as a spiritual power; or (3) is he thoroughly subjective, reading his own moods into Nature or using Nature chiefly for the expression of his moods? Or again, does the author describe with merely expository purpose, to make the background of his work clear? 2. Individual Persons and Human Life: Is the author skilful in descriptions of personal appearance and dress? Does he produce his impressions by full enumeration of details, or by emphasis on prominent or characteristic details? How often and how fully does he describe scenes of human activity (such as a street scene, a social gathering, a procession on the march)? 3. How frequent and how vivid are his descriptions of the inanimate background of human life—buildings, interiors of rooms, and the rest? 4. Does the author skilfully use description to create the general atmosphere in which he wishes to invest his work—an atmosphere of cheerfulness, of mystery, of activity, or any of a hundred other moods?

STYLE. Style in general means 'manner of writing.' In the broad sense it includes everything pertaining to the author's spirit and point of view—almost everything which is here being

discussed. More narrowly considered, as 'external style,' it designates the author's use of language. Questions to be asked in regard to external style are such as these: Is it good or bad, careful or careless, clear and easy or confused and difficult; simple or complex; terse and forceful (perhaps colloquial) or involved and stately; eloquent, balanced, rhythmical; vigorous, or musical, languid, delicate and decorative; varied or monotonous; plain or figurative; poor or rich in connotation and poetic suggestiveness; beautiful, or only clear and strong? Are the sentences mostly long or short; periodic or loose; mostly of one type, such as the declarative, or with frequent introduction of such other forms as the question and the exclamation?

POETRY. Most of what has thus far been said applies to both Prose and Poetry. But in Poetry, as the literature especially characterized in general by high Emotion, Imagination, and Beauty, finer and more delicate effects are to be sought than in Prose. Poetry, generally speaking, is the expression of the deeper nature; it belongs peculiarly to the realm of the spirit. On the side of poetical expression such imaginative figures of speech as metaphors and similes, and such devices as alliteration, prove especially helpful. It may be asked further of poetry, whether the meter and stanza structure are appropriate to the mood and thought and so handled as to bring out the emotion effectively; and whether the sound is adapted to the sense (for example, musical where the idea is of peace or quiet beauty). If the sound of the words actually imitates the sound of the thing indicated, the effect is called Onomatopoeia. Among kinds of poetry, according to form, the most important are: (1) Narrative, which includes many subordinate forms, such as the Epic. (2) Lyric. Lyric poems are expressions of spontaneous emotion and are necessarily short. (3)

Dramatic, including not merely the drama but all poetry of vigorous action. (4) Descriptive, like Goldsmith's 'Deserted Village' and Tennyson's 'Dream of Fair Women.' Minor kinds are: (5) Satiric; and (6) Didactic.

Highly important in poetry is Rhythm, but the word means merely 'flow,' so that rhythm belongs to prose as well as to poetry. Good rhythm is merely a pleasing succession of sounds. Meter, the distinguishing formal mark of poetry and all verse, is merely rhythm which is regular in certain fundamental respects, roughly speaking is rhythm in which the recurrence of stressed syllables or of feet with definite time-values is regular. There is no proper connection either in spelling or in meaning between rhythm and rime (which is generally misspelled 'rhyme'). The adjective derived from 'rhythm' is 'rhythmical'; there is no adjective from 'rime' except 'rimed.' The word 'verse' in its general sense includes all writing in meter. Poetry is that verse which has real literary merit. In a very different and narrower sense 'verse' means 'line' (never properly 'stanza').

CLASSICISM AND ROMANTICISM. Two of the most important contrasting tendencies of style in the general sense are Classicism and Romanticism. Classicism means those qualities which are most characteristic of the best literature of Greece and Rome. It is in fact partly identical with Idealism. It aims to express the inner truth or central principles of things, without anxiety for minor details, and it is by nature largely intellectual in quality, though not by any means to the exclusion of emotion. In outward form, therefore, it insists on correct structure, restraint, careful finish and avoidance of all excess. 'Paradise Lost,' Arnold's 'Sohrab and Rustum,' and Addison's essays are modern examples.

Romanticism, which in general prevails in modern literature, lays most emphasis on independence and fulness of expression and on strong emotion, and it may be comparatively careless of form. The Classical style has well been called sculpturesque, the Romantic picturesque. The virtues of the Classical are exquisiteness and incisive significance; of the Romantic, richness and splendor. The dangers of the Classical are coldness and formality; of the Romantic, over-luxuriance, formlessness and excess of emotion.

PART V

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO WESTERN LITERATURE

A Brief Introduction to Western Literature

- Greek and Roman
- The Renaissance
- Romanticism
- Modern Age
- Middle Ages
- Enlightenment
- Victorian

BEGINNINGS: THE GREEKS AND ROMANS (450 B.C.-400 A.D.)

Greek literature begins with two masterpieces the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, which were created by Homer. As a result of the political and economical development and the great literary achievements in poetry and drama, ancient Greek literary criticism prospered. The greatest Ancient literary critics are Plato and Aristotle, who opened the history of Western literary criticism.

The ancient world represents the most significant area and period of ancient man's development. The area is the Mediterranean Basin. In this place and time ancient man laid the intellectual and religious foundations of the modern Western outlook. The literature of the Ancient world was written in three languages—Hebrew, Greek, and Latin.

The Hebrew achieved little of note in the military area and their later history was a bitter and unsuccessful struggle for freedom. They left no drama nor epic poetry but religious literature, which was later called the *Old testament*.

The Romans looked to Greek models for their literature. Romans began to write after they conquered Greece. The first real

example of a literary work in Latin is a translation of Homer's *Odyssey*. In spite of the imitation, there were the finest Roman accomplishments in literature, as in other aspects of art and life.

THE MIDDLE AGES (400-1500 A.D.)

The period of the Middle Ages encompasses a thousand years of European history, distinguished by the Christian religion. During the Medieval times, there was no central government to keep the order. The only organization that seemed to unite Europe was the Christian Church. Christianity took the lead in politics, law, art and learning for hundreds of years. Religion shaped people's lives.

The medieval literature can be divided into three categories—religious writing, romance, and vernacular writings.

- ♦ The greatest achievement of religious literature was made by Italian poet, Dante. His masterpiece, the *Divine Comedy*, is the greatest Christian poem with a profound vision of the Medieval Christian world. It expresses humanistic ideas which foreshadowed the spirit of the Renaissance.
- ♦ With regard to romance, the most well-known are the adventures of King Arthur and his knights of the round Table.
- ♦ The vernacular literature of this time tends to be realistic and satirical. The greatest works of this kind is Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*.

THE RENAISSANCE (c. 1500-1660)

Against the theology of the Middle Ages arose the intellectual movement, Renaissance, which sprang first in Italy in the fourteenth century and gradually spread all over Europe. The

movement had two striking features. One was the thirsting curiosity for classical literature, and the other was the keen interest in human beauty and human activities, which is in sharp contrast with medieval theology.

Renaissance marks the transition from the medieval to the modern world. It resulted from many new facts and forces arising within the old order of the Medieval Period:

- Hellenistic spirit—human beings are glorious creatures capable of individual development (perfection)
- The Protestant Reformation
- The introduction of printing, which led to a commercial market for literature
- The great economic and political changes leading to the rise of democracy
- The encouragement of the growing new science.

New ideas emerged in literature, as transparent in Sir Philip Sidney's (1554-1586) *The Defense of Poesy* (c. 1580), which is usually considered the most important work of literary criticism from this period. In his *Defense*, Sidney argues that poetry must serve not simply to give pleasure, but also to contribute positively to the life of society. Unlike the writers of medieval allegories, however, Sidney believed that literature could-and should-have a moral impact without being didactic or prescriptive.

THE ENLIGHTENMENT (1660-1798):

The Enlightenment, a period of neoclassicism is characterized by a revitalized interest in the values and ideas of the classical world, particularly of the Romans.

Classicism places emphasis upon the qualities of the classical literature:

- Rationalism—elegant and well-proportioned form, precise idea, true-to-life description and standardized language.
- Restraint of emotion and passion
- An ability to think logically and to communicate objectively rather than subjectively.
- Following the fixed laws and rules drawn from Greek and Latin works.

These qualities are apparent in the words of John Dryden, Alexander Pope, and Samuel Johnson, the greatest English men of letters of Neoclassicism.

THE ROMANTIC PERIOD (1798-1837):

As a reaction to the restraints and rules imposed by Neoclassicists, Romanticism came into being in the late 18th century. Romanticism is a bourgeois literary movement and its emergence was closely connected with the French Revolution, the European national liberation movement and the Industrial Revolution.

The Characteristics of the Romantic Period:

- Romanticists were discontented with and opposed to the development of capitalism. They tried to idealize the life of a non-capitalist society and thus laid emphasis on subjective idealism and emotional expression.
- Romanticists had a persistent interest in the medieval literature, such as epics, ballads, which were not restricted by various kinds of classical rules and were

characterized by rich imagination, strong emotion and free expression.

- Romanticists showed a profound admiration and love for nature.
- Romanticists were full of moral enthusiasm, believing ideality.
- Romanticists took interest in the strange and the mysterious as opposed to common sense.

The leading Romantic writers include Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelly and Keats in England.

THE VICTORIAN PERIOD (1837-1901)

It rose as a reaction against the sentimentality of Romanticism. During the Victorian era rapid industrialization, poverty, population growth, and mass transportation contributed to a general sense that the world was changing rapidly, and people had difficulty coping with these changes.

It was in the Victorian era (1837–1901) that the novel became the leading literary genre in English, dominated especially by Charles Dickens, but there were many other significant writers, including the Brontë sisters, and then Thomas Hardy, in the final decades of the 19th century.

Victorian novel:

From a structural point of view, we can divide Victorian Novels mainly into three groups:

1) EARLY-VICTORIAN NOVEL (or social-problem novel) dealing with social and humanitarian themes. The main representative was Charles Dickens

2) MID-VICTORIAN NOVEL (novel of purpose) showing Romantic and Gothic elements and a psychological interest. The main representative writers were the Brontë sisters and R. L. Stevenson

3) LATE- VICTORIAN NOVEL (naturalistic novel near to European Naturalism) showing a scientific look at human life, objectivity of observation, dissatisfaction with Victorian values. The main representative writers were T. Hardy and O. Wilde.

Other minor forms of novel developed in this period:

4) Novel of Manners

Focusing on economic problems of a particular class (W. Thackeray).

5) Colonialist Fiction

Presenting an exaltation of British imperialistic power (R. Kipling).

6) Nonsense literature

Dealing with fantastic adventures (L. Carroll)

THE MODERN PERIOD (1901-1950)

Modernism was a complex and diverse international literary movement, originating at about the end of the 19th century and reaching its maturity in the mid 20th. New trends and schools in literature and criticism emerged. The dominant critical views can be divided into three groupings:

- **Formal**, those concerned with the structure or form of texts (formalism, structuralism, deconstruction);
- **Social**, those concerned with texts in relation to social contexts (new historicism, feminism, Marxism); and

- **Personal**, those concerned with the interaction of the individual (author or reader) and texts (reader-response criticism, psychoanalytic criticism).

Modernism is mainly characterized by a conscious rejection of established rules, traditions and conventions both in content and in form.

In content, the search for identity is the frequent common theme. To modernists, the world is an irrational machine, from whose control man can by no means escape; man is an indifferent, selfish animal who is unable to understand each other; nature is like a horrible prison where man's freedom is not allowed. In such a world of chaos, man loses his identity and doesn't know where he belongs to.

In form, Modernism is the synonym of revolution. Not any of the previous periods in history has ever seen so many experiments in form and style. They advocate "art for art's sake". To them, art should be separated from life and politics. It serves nothing but itself.

Characteristics of Modern Literature:

- ♦ Modern writers are known for
 - ✦ themes of alienation and disconnectedness
 - ✦ frequent use of irony and understatement
 - ✦ experimentation with new literary techniques in fiction and poetry:
 - ♦ stream of consciousness
 - ♦ interior dialogue
 - ♦ fragments

- ✦ trying to create a unique style
- ✦ rise of ethnic and women writers.

The Postmodern Period (1950- Present)

The term Postmodern literature is used to describe certain tendencies in post-World War II literature. It is both a continuation of the experimentation championed by writers of the modernist period, relying heavily, for example, on fragmentation, paradox, questionable narrators, etc., and a reaction against Enlightenment ideas implicit in Modernist literature.

Characteristics of Postmodern Literature:

- ◆ The best adjective for this literary period is eclectic—a collection of a little bit of everything.
- ◆ Postmodernists create traditional works without traditional structure or narrative.
- ◆ The writings have increasingly addressed social issues related to gender and race and youthful rebellion.
- ◆ Questioning of “traditional values”—insistence that values are not permanent but only “local” or “historical
- ◆ The writings are often critical and ironic, concentrating on surface realities and the absurdity of daily life.
- ◆ There are no heroes; anti-heroes are common
- ◆ Often detached, unemotional
- ◆ Individuals often seem isolated.

Having seen the stages of the development of Western literature, of which English literature is part and parcel, in the pages that follow we shall hardly move out of England, and the

term 'English' will refer as much to the race as well as to the language. Let us therefore begin by considering very briefly both the race and the country, for, though the subject matter of the writer is humanity, and humanity is above race and nation, yet he is bound to take humanity as he finds it in his own country, and, to a lesser extent, in his own age.

PART VI

A BRIEF HISTORY OF ENGLAND FROM ANTIQUITY TO THE 16TH CENTURY

A Brief History of England⁶

Prehistory & Antiquity

England was settled by humans for at least 500,000 years. The first modern humans arrived during the Ice Age (about 35,000 to 10,000 years ago), when the sea levels were lower and Britain was connected to the European mainland. It is these people who built the ancient megalithic monuments of Stonehenge and Avebury.

Between 1,500 and 500 BCE, Celtic tribes migrated from Central Europe and France to Britain and mixed with the indigenous inhabitants, creating a new culture slightly distinct from the Continental Celtic one. This was the Bronze Age.

The Romans tried a first time to invade *Britannia* (the Latin name of the island) in 55 BCE under Julius Caesar, but were not successful until 43 CE, during the reign of Emperor Claudius. In 122 CE, Emperor Hadrian built a wall in the north of Britannia to keep the barbarian Picts at bay.

The Romans controlled most of present-day England and Wales, and founded a large number of cities that still exist today. London, York, St Albans, Bath, Exeter, Lincoln, Leicester, Worcester, Gloucester, Chichester, Winchester, Colchester, Manchester, Chester, Lancaster, were all Roman towns, as in fact were all the cities with names now ending in -

⁶ http://www.eupedia.com/england/english_history.shtml

chester, -cester or -caster, which derive from Latin *castrum* ("fortification").

The Anglo-Saxons

The Romans progressively abandoned Britannia in the 5th century as their Empire was falling apart and legions were needed to protect Rome.

With the Romans gone, the Celtic tribes started fighting with each other again, and one of the local chieftains had the not so brilliant idea to request help from some Germanic tribes from the North of present-day Germany and South of Denmark. These were the Angles, Saxons and Jutes, who arrived in the 5th and 6th centuries.

However, things did not happen as the Celts had expected. The Germanic tribes did not go back home after the fight, and on the contrary felt strong enough to seize the whole of the country for themselves, which they did, pushing back all the Celtic tribes to Wales and Cornwall, and founding their respective kingdoms of Kent (the Jutes), Essex, Sussex and Wessex (the Saxons), and further north East Anglia, Mercia and Northumbria (the Angles). These 7 kingdoms, which ruled over all England from about 500 to 850 AD, were later known as the Anglo-Saxon heptarchy.

The Vikings

From the second half of the 9th century, the Norse from Scandinavia started invading Europe, the Swedes taking up Eastern Europe, Russia (which they founded as a country) and the Byzantine Empire, the Norwegians raiding Scotland and

Ireland, discovering and settling in the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland (and were in fact the first Europeans to set foot in America in 1000 AD), while the Danes wrought havoc throughout Western Europe, as far as North Africa.

The Danes invaded the North-East of England, from Northumberland to East Anglia, and founded a new kingdom known as the Danelaw. Another group of Danes managed to take Paris, and obtain a grant of land from the King of France in 911. This area became the Duchy of Normandy, and its inhabitants were the Normans (from 'North Men' or 'Norsemen', another term for 'Viking').

The Normans

After having settled in their newly acquired land, the Normans adopted the French feudal system and French as official language.

During that time, the Kings of Wessex had resisted and eventually vanquished the Danes in England in the 10th century. But the powerful Canute the Great (995-1035), king of the newly unified Denmark and Norway and overlord of Schleswig and Pomerania, led two other invasions on England in 1013 and 1015, and became king of England in 1016, after crushing the Anglo-Saxon king, Edmund II.

Edward the Confessor (1004-1066) succeeded Canute's two sons. He nominated William, Duke of Normandy, as his successor, but upon his death, Harold Godwinson, the powerful Earl of Wessex, crowned himself king. William refused to acknowledge Harold as King and invaded England with 12,000

soldiers in 1066. King Harold was killed at the battle of Hastings (by an arrow in the eye, as the legend says), and William the Conqueror became William I of England. His descendants have sat on the throne of England to this day.

William I (1027-1087) ordered a nationwide survey of land property known as the *Domesday Book*, and redistributed land among his vassals. Many of the country's medieval castles were built under William's reign (e.g. Dover, Arundel, Windsor, Warwick, Kenilworth, Lincoln, etc.).

The Norman rulers kept their possessions in France, and even extended them to most of Western France (Brittany, Aquitaine...). French became the official language of England, and remained until 1362, a bit after the beginning of the Hundred Years' War with France. English nevertheless remained the language of the populace, and the fusion of English (a mixture of Anglo-Saxon and Norse languages) with French and Latin (used by the clergy) slowly evolved into modern English.

12th & 13th Centuries: Royal Intrigues & Troubled Successions

The English royals after William I had the infamous habit to contend for the throne. William's son, William II was killed while hunting, and it is believed that he was in fact murdered, so that William's second son, Henry, could become king. Henry I's succession was also agitated, with his daughter Matilda and her cousin Stephen (grandson of William I) starting a civil war for the throne. Although Stephen won, Matilda's son succeeded him

as Henry II (1133-1189). It is under Henry II that the University of Oxford was established.

The following struggle of Henry II's two children was made famous by the legend of Robin Hood. Richard I "Lionheart" was hardly ever in England, too busy defending his French possessions or fighting the infidels in the Holy Land. During that time, his brother John "Lackland" usurped the throne and started another civil war.

The Magna Carta:

Magna Carta was issued in June 1215 and was the first document to put into writing the principle that the king and his government was not above the law. It sought to prevent the king from exploiting his power, and placed limits of royal authority by establishing law as a power in itself.

To resolve the civil unrest and end the king's abuse of power, a group of rebel barons drafted the Articles of the Barons, which became the Magna Carta. In fear that the rebellion would escalate to full-scale civil war and endanger his throne, King John affixed his seal on the document on June 15, 1215, making it Europe's first written constitution. After only a few weeks, however, Pope Innocent III, voided the Magna Carta at the king's urging. This reignited the violence between the monarchy and the barons, but after King John's sudden death in 1216, the Magna Carta was reinstated under 9-year-old King Henry III.

John's grandson, Edward I "Longshanks" (1239-1307) spent most of his 35-year reign fighting wars, first against his barons led by Simon de Montfort, then on the 9th Crusade, back home

annexing Wales, and last but not least against the Scots, led by William Wallace and Robert the Bruce.

Edward I's son, Edward II, was all his father was not. He did not like war, preferring to party with his friends. He also happened to be gay, which led to his imprisonment and tragic murder by his wife and her lover.

14th & 15th Centuries: Hundred Years' War & War of the Roses

Edward III (1312-1377) succeeded his father at the age of 15 and reigned for 50 years (the second longest reign in English history after Henry III, queens excluded). His reign was marked by the beginning of the ***Hundred Years' War*** (1337-1416) and epidemics of bubonic plague ("Black Death"), which killed one third of England (and Europe's) population.

Edward III was often fighting in France, and the government was controlled *de facto* by his third son John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster. John of Gaunt's son, Henry Bolingbroke, took advantage of his cousin Richard II's absence to proclaim himself King **Henry IV** (1367-1413). Escaping several assassination attempts, Henry also had to deal with the revolt of Owen Glendower, who declared himself Prince of Wales in 1400, then with the rebellion of the Earl of Northumberland.

Henry V (1387-1422), famously defeated the French at the ***Battle of Agincourt*** in 1415, but his pious and peace-loving son **Henry VI** (1421-1471), who inherited the throne at just one

year old, was to have a much more troubled reign. The regent lost most of the English possessions in France to a 17-year old girl (Joan of Arc) and in 1455, the Wars of the Roses broke out. This civil war opposed the House of Lancaster (the Red Rose, supporters of Henry VI) to the House of York (the White Rose, supporters of Edward IV). The Yorks argued that the crown should have passed to Edward III' second son, Lionel of Antwerp, rather than to the Lancasters descending from John of Gaunt.

One of the key players at this period was Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, nicknamed "the Kingmaker", for deposing Henry VI for Edward IV, then again Edward for Henry 9 years later.

Edward IV's son, Edward V, only reigned for one year, before being locked in the Tower of London by his evil uncle, **Richard III** (1452-1485), although probably not as evil as Shakespeare depicted him in his play. The reason is that Lancastrian **Henry Tudor** (1457-1509), the half-brother of Henry VI, defeated Richard III at the Battle of Bosworth Field in 1485, and became Henry VII, founder of the House of Tudor, for which Shakespeare wrote.

Henry Tudor's son is maybe England's most famous and historically important ruler, the magnificent Henry VIII (1491-1547).

PART VII

INTRODUCTION TO (OLD & MIDDLE) ENGLISH LITERATURE

English literature

English literature is literature written in English. It is not merely the literature of England or of the British Isles, but a vast and growing body of writings made up of the work of authors who use the English language as a natural medium for communication. In other words, the 'English, of 'English literature' refers not to a nation but to a language... literature is an art which exploits language, English literature is an art which exploits the English language⁷. Anthony Burgess

English literature is generally seen as beginning with the epic poem "Beowulf", which dates from between the 8th to the 11th centuries, the most famous work in Old English, which has achieved national epic status in England, despite being set in Scandinavia. The next important landmark is the works of the poet Geoffrey Chaucer (c. 1343–1400), especially *The Canterbury Tales*. Then during the Renaissance, especially the late 16th and early 17th centuries, major drama and poetry was written by Edmund Spenser, William Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, John Donne and many others. Another great poet, from later in the 17th century, was John Milton (1608–74) author of the epic poem *Paradise Lost* (1667). The late 17th and the early 18th century are particularly associated with satire, especially in the poetry of John Dryden and Alexander Pope, and the prose works of Jonathan Swift. The 18th century also saw the first British novels in the works of Daniel Defoe, Samuel Richardson, and Henry Fielding, while the late 18th

⁷ Anthony Burgess. *English Literature: A Survey for Students*. 10th ed. England: Longman Group Ltd., 1974. P. 9.

and early 19th century was the period of the Romantic poets Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley and Keats.

It was in the Victorian era (1837–1901) that the novel became the leading literary genre in English, dominated especially by Charles Dickens, but there were many other significant writers, including the Brontë sisters, and then Thomas Hardy, in the final decades of the 19th century. Americans began to produce major writers in the 19th century, including novelist Herman Melville, author of *Moby Dick* (1851) and the poets Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson. Another American, Henry James, was a major novelist of the late 19th and early twentieth century, while Polish-born Joseph Conrad was perhaps the most important British novelist of the first two decades of the 20th century.

Irish writers were especially important in the 20th century, including James Joyce, and later Samuel Beckett, both central figures in the Modernist movement. Americans, like poets T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound and novelist William Faulkner, were other important modernists. In the mid 20th century major writers started to appear in the various countries of the British Commonwealth, several who have been Nobel-laureates. Many major writers in English in the 20th and 21st centuries have come from outside the United Kingdom. The term Postmodern literature is used to describe certain tendencies in post-World War II literature. It is both a continuation of the experimentation championed by writers of the modernist period, relying heavily, for example, on fragmentation, paradox, questionable narrators, etc., and a reaction against Enlightenment ideas implicit in Modernist literature.

Literary forms

Literary forms such as the novel or lyric poem, or genres, such as the horror-story, have a history. In one sense, they appear because they have not been thought of before, but they also appear, or become popular for other cultural reasons, such as the absence or emergence of literacy. In studying the history of literature (or any kind of art), you are challenged to consider

- what constitutes a given form,
- how it has developed, and
- whether it has a future.

The novels of the late Catherine Cookson may have much in common with those of Charlotte Brontë, but is it worth mimicking in the late 20th century, what was ground-breaking in the 1840s? While Brontë examines what is contemporary for her, Miss Cookson invents an imagined past which may be of interest to the cultural historian in studying the present sources of her nostalgia, but not to the student of the period in which her novels are set. Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* is a long work of prose fiction, but critics do not necessarily describe it as a novel. Why might this be? Knowing works in their historical context does not give easy answers, but may shed more or less light on our darkness in considering such questions.

Old English Literature: c. 658–1100

Old English literature, or Anglo-Saxon literature, encompasses the surviving literature written in Old English in Anglo-Saxon England, in the period after the settlement of the Saxons and other Germanic tribes in England, as the Jutes and the Angles, c. 450, after the withdrawal of the Romans, and "ending soon after the Norman Conquest" in 1066; that is, c. 1100–50.

^{*8} The difficulty encountered in reading Old English Literature lies in the fact that the language is very different from that of today. Its vocabulary is for the most part native, though already there have been some borrowings from Latin. Its grammar shows declinable nouns, pronouns, and adjectives and a more elaborate verbal system than that of today. There were four main dialects: Northumbrian, which was the first to produce a literature; Mercian, the language of the Midlands; Kentish, the language of the southeast spoken in an area larger than that of the modern county of Kent; and West Saxon, the language of Alfred, which—due to the political supremacy of Wessex—became a 'standard' and in which almost all the extant texts are preserved.

Old English works include genres such as epic poetry, hagiography, sermons, Bible translations, legal works, chronicles, riddles, and others. In all, there are about 400 surviving manuscripts from the period. The earliest surviving work of literature in Old English is Cædmon's Hymn, which was probably composed between 658–80.

⁸ Albert, Edward. *English Literature, 5th Ed. Revised by J. A. Stone*. Oxford & UK: Oxford University Press, 1979. P. 12.

Oral tradition was very strong in early English culture and most literary works were written to be performed. Epic poems were thus very popular, and some, including "Beowulf", have survived to the present day. Much Old English verse in the extant manuscripts is probably adapted from the earlier Germanic war poems from the continent. When such poetry was brought to England it was still being handed down orally from one generation to another. Old English poetry falls broadly into two styles or fields of reference, the heroic Germanic and the Christian. The Anglo-Saxons were converted to Christianity after their arrival in England.

The epic poem "Beowulf", is the most famous work in Old English and has achieved national epic status in England, despite being set in Scandinavia. The only surviving manuscript is the Nowell Codex, the precise date of which is debated, but most estimates place it close to the year 1000. "Beowulf" is the conventional title, and its composition by an anonymous Anglo-Saxon poet, who is commonly referred to as the "Beowulf poet", is dated between the 8th and the early 11th century. In the poem, Beowulf, a hero of the Geats in Scandinavia, comes to the help of Hroðgar, the king of the Danes, whose mead hall (in Heorot) has been under attack by a monster known as Grendel. After Beowulf slays him, Grendel's mother attacks the hall and is then also defeated. Victorious, Beowulf goes home to Geatland in Sweden and later becomes king of the Geats. After fifty years, Beowulf defeats a dragon, but is fatally wounded in the battle. After his death, his attendants bury him in a tumulus, a burial mound, in Geatland.

*⁹A short extract is printed below, with a literal translation, to illustrate the style of the poem as an example to Old English writings. The extract describes the funeral rites of the hero, and occurs near the end of the poem (lines 3137-49).

Him oa gegiredan Geata leode
For him then the people of the Geats made ready
ad on eordan unwaclicne,
A splendid funeral pyre on the earth,
helmum behongen, hildebordum,
Hung around with helmets, with battle-shields,
beorhtum byrnum, swa he bena waes;
With shining corslets, as he requested;
alegdon oa tomiddes maerne peoden
Then they laid in the midst of it the illustrious prince,
haeleo hiofende, hlaford leofne.
The weeping warriors, the beloved lord.
Ongunnon pa on beorge baelfyra maest
Then the warriors began to kindle on the cliff
wigend weccan: wudurec astah
The greatest of funeral fires: the wood-smoke rose up
sweart ofer swiooole, swSgende leg,
Dark above the fire, the roaring flames,
wope bewunden --windblond gelaeg--
Surrounded by lamentation--the tumult of the winds subsided--
oopæet he he banhus gebrocen hæfde,
Till it had completely crushed the body,
hat on hreore. Higum unrote
Hot in his breast. Sad in mind
modceare maendon, mondryhtnes cwealm.
They complained of the sorrow of their hearts, the death of their liege-lord

⁹ Albert, Edward. *English Literature, 5th Ed. Revised by J. A. Stone*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979. Pp. 12-13

It will be observed that the language is forceful and expressive, conveying with an economy of words the picture of the funeral pyre on the cliff top and the lamentation of the warriors for their dead king. The use of compound words should be noted especially, together with that of the kenning, which skillfully handled "took on the form of a compressed vivid statement of a highly original image." The best example in this passage is *banhus*—literally 'bone house,' i.e., 'body.' A further stylistic characteristic which should be noted is the use of repetition and variation. The same idea is expressed more than once by the use of different Words which were more or less synonymous. Such parallel phrasing can be seen in lines 5 and 6 above: *malrne peoden* and *hlaford leofne* ('illustrious prince' and 'beloved lord') and elsewhere as the translation will suggest. The verse is strongly rhythmical, based on a stress system with four stresses to the full line, two in each of the half-lines; it is also alliterative, there being two alliterating syllables in the first half-line and one (usually the first) in the second. The stressed syllables are the ones which bear the alliteration.

Found in the same manuscript as the heroic poem *Beowulf*, the Nowell Codex, is the poem *Judith*, a retelling of the story found in the Latin Vulgate Bible's *Book of Judith* about the beheader of the Assyrian general Holofernes.

Nearly all Anglo-Saxon authors are anonymous: twelve are known by name from Medieval sources, but only four of those are known by their vernacular works with any certainty: *Cædmon*,

Bede, Alfred the Great, and Cynewulf. Cædmon is the earliest English poet whose name is known. Cædmon's only known surviving work is Cædmon's Hymn, which probably dates from the late 7th century. The Hymn itself was composed between 658 and 680, recorded in the earlier part of the 8th century, and survives today in at least 14 verified manuscript copies. The poem is one of the earliest attested examples of Old English and is, with the runic Ruthwell Cross and Franks Casket inscriptions, one of three candidates for the earliest attested example of Old English poetry. It is also one of the earliest recorded examples of sustained poetry in a Germanic language. The poem, "The Dream of the Rood", was inscribed upon the Ruthwell Cross.

Chronicles contained a range of historical and literary accounts, and a notable example is the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. This is a collection of annals in Old English chronicling the history of the Anglo-Saxons. Nine manuscripts survive in whole or in part, though not all are of equal historical value and none of them is the original version. The oldest seems to have been started towards the end of King Alfred's reign in the 9th century, and the most recent was written at Peterborough Abbey in 1116. Almost all of the material in the Chronicle is in the form of annals by year, the earliest being dated at 60 BC (the annals' date for Caesar's invasions of Britain), and historical material follows up to the year in which the chronicle was written, at which point contemporary records begin.

The poem "Battle of Maldon" also deals with history. This is the name given to a work, of uncertain date, celebrating the real Battle of Maldon of 991, at which the Anglo-Saxons failed to prevent a Viking invasion. Only 325 lines of the poem are extant; both the beginning and the ending are lost.

"The Wanderer" is an Old English poem preserved only in an anthology known as the *Exeter Book*, a manuscript dating from the late 10th century. It counts 115 lines of alliterative verse. As often the case in Anglo-Saxon verse, the composer and compiler are anonymous, and within the manuscript the poem is untitled. The Wanderer conveys the meditations of a solitary exile on his past glories as a warrior in his lord's band of retainers, his present hardships and the values of forbearance and faith in the heavenly Lord. Another poem with a religious theme, "The Seafarer" is also recorded in the *Exeter Book*, one of the four surviving manuscripts, and consists of 124 lines, followed by the single word "Amen". In the past it has been frequently referred to as an elegy, a poem that mourns a loss, or has the more general meaning of a simply sorrowful piece of writing. However, some scholars have argued that the content of the poem also links it with Sapiential Books, or Wisdom Literature.

Classical antiquity was not forgotten in Anglo-Saxon England and several Old English poems are adaptations of late classical philosophical texts. The longest is King Alfred's (849–99) 9th-century translation of Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy*. The Metres of Boethius are a series of Old English alliterative poems

adapted from the Latin metra of the Consolation of Philosophy soon after Alfred's prose translation. By the time literacy becomes widespread, Old English is effectively a foreign and dead language. And its forms do not significantly affect subsequent developments in English literature. (With the scholarly exception of the 19th century poet, Gerard Manley Hopkins, who finds in Old English verse the model for his metrical system of "sprung rhythm".)

***¹⁰The Development of Literary Forms:**

During the period Old English Literature undergoes a noticeable development, though it is well to remember that it is the result of hundreds of years of slow growth, and it is impossible to divide the types of verse, for example, into definite water-tight compartments.

1. Poetry. Poetry appears earlier than prose, and the heroic type of *Beowulf*, *Waldere*, and *The Fight at Finnsburh* persists throughout the period, for similar qualities are found in a poem as late as *The Battle of Maldon*.

a) The *epic* exists in one of its forms in *Beowulf*, which lacks the 'finer' qualities of the classical epic, the strict unity, the high dignity, and the broad motive, though it possesses a vigour and a majesty which have obvious appeal. The so-called Christian epics have little claim to the title and should not be considered here.

¹⁰ Albert, Edward. English Literature, 5th Ed. Revised by J. A. Stone. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979. Pp. 17-19

b) The *lyric* has no real example in Old English, though there are certain poems which have some of the expressive melancholy and personal emotion associated with the lyric, *e.g.*, *The Wanderer* and *The Seafarer*.

2. Prose. Although much of Old English prose consists of translation from Latin and is clearly influenced by the originals, it is by no means correct to consider the prose of the period as lacking in originality or personal qualities. The homilies of AElfric and Wulfstan are at the beginning of the true line of development to the prose of the Authorized Version. The beginnings of historical writings are to be seen in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, and the development is clear by a comparison between the Cynewulf and Cyneheard episode in the annal for 755 and the later annals in the E'MS.

The Development of Literary Style

1. Poetry. A comparison between the so-called Caedmonian and Cynewulfian poems shows clearly a development in technique. There is an easier flow to the later poetry in general, a greater sureness in handling material, greater individuality of approach and feeling, less reliance on stock phrases, subtler use of alliteration, and a greater desire for stylistic effect. This is the natural development of a literature, and though the alliterative type of poetry was apparently to receive the death-knoll with the Conquest, the flowering of a similar type in the fourteenth century shows that this is more apparent than real.

2. Prose. In spite of its limited scope as the vehicle in the main of the homily and historical writing a great advance in style is readily

seen. From the earlier simple, halting prose of the Chronicle and Alfred, where the writers tend to become obscure and elliptical when presented with more abstruse thoughts, from the period where sentence structure is fairly lacking the finer touches of rhythm and cadence, the later prose is noteworthy for its fluency, its animation, and indeed, as is to be expected, its confidence. There is in some, especially in the prose of AElfric and Wulfstan, an excellent use of alliteration and of rhetorical figures. The personality of the author becomes truly apparent. The effects of the Conquest on both poetry and prose have doubtlessly in the past been exaggerated. Rhyme was to take the place of alliteration, but already before the end of the period there are signs that this would have been a natural development due to the influence of Latin. The Conquest certainly removed from power the audience for which the older type was composed, and the impetus was lost; but, as will be noted, the later flowering of the alliterative type, with a looser structure it is true, shows clearly that the composition of the older type was never completely lost. The inflexional system was already becoming looser before the effects of the Conquest could make themselves felt, and while, this process was undoubtedly hastened by the events following 1066, it cannot be maintained that there was in any real sense a decay of the prose style of, say, Wulfstan. The development in the Middle English period of the homiletic prose style has clearly been demonstrated to be in the true line from that of the Old English period. In other words, in spite of the Conquest the continuity is clear.

Middle English Literature: 1100–1500

After the Norman conquest of England in 1066, the written form of the Anglo-Saxon language became less common, and under the influence of the new aristocracy Law, French became the standard language of courts, parliament, and polite society. As the invaders integrated, their language and literature mingled with that of the natives and the Norman dialects of the ruling classes became Anglo-Norman. At the same time Anglo-Saxon underwent a gradual transition into Middle English. Political power was no longer in English hands, so that the West Saxon literary language had no more influence than any other dialect and Middle English literature was written in the many dialects that correspond to the region, history, culture, and background of individual writers.

In this period religious literature continued to enjoy popularity and Hagiographies were written, adapted and translated, for example, *The Life of Saint Audrey*, Eadmer's (c. 1060 – c. 1126) contemporary biography of *Anselm of Canterbury*, and the *South English Legendary*. At the end of the 12th century, Layamon's Brut adapted Wace to make the first English-language work to discuss the legends of Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. It was also the first historiography written in English since the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. In this century a new form of English now known as Middle English evolved. This is the earliest form of English which is comprehensible to modern readers and listeners, albeit not easily.

Middle English Bible translations, notably Wycliffe's Bible, helped to establish English as a literary language. Wycliffe's Bible is the name now given to a group of Bible translations into Middle English, that were made under the direction of, or at the instigation of, John Wycliffe. They appeared between approximately 1382 and 1395. These Bible translations were the chief inspiration and cause of the Lollard movement, a pre-Reformation movement that rejected many of the distinctive teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. The term "Lollard" refers to the followers of John Wycliffe, a prominent theologian who was dismissed from the University of Oxford in 1381 for criticism of the Church. In the Middle Ages most Western Christian people encountered the Bible only in the form of oral versions of scriptures, verses and homilies in Latin (other sources were mystery plays, usually conducted in the vernacular, and popular iconography). Though relatively few people could read at this time, Wycliffe's idea was to translate the Bible into the vernacular, saying "it helpeth Christian men to study the Gospel in that tongue in which they know best Christ's sentence". Although unauthorized, the work was popular: Wycliffite Bible texts are the most common manuscript literature in Middle English and almost 200 manuscripts of the Wycliffite Bible survive.

Another literary genre, that of Romances, appear in English from the 13th century, with King Horn and Havelock the Dane, based on Anglo-Norman originals such as the *Romance of Horn* (ca. 1170), but it was in the 14th century that major writers in English first appeared. These are William Langland, Geoffrey

Chaucer and the so-called 'Pearl Poet', whose most famous work is *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*.

Langland's *Piers Plowman* (written ca. 1360–87) or *Visio Willelmi de Petro Plowman* (William's Vision of Piers Plowman) is a Middle English allegorical narrative poem, written in unrhymed alliterative verse.

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight is a late-14th-century Middle English alliterative romance. It is one of the better-known Arthurian stories of an established type known as the "beheading game". Developing from Welsh, Irish and English tradition, *Sir Gawain* highlights the importance of honor and chivalry. It is an important poem in the romance genre, which typically involves a hero who goes on a quest that tests his prowess. Preserved in the same manuscript with *Sir Gawayne* were three other poems, now generally accepted as the work of its author. These are two alliterative poems of moral teaching, "Patience" and "Purity", and an intricate elegiac poem, *Pearl*. The author of *Sir Gawayne* and the other poems is frequently referred to as 'the Pearl Poet'." The English dialect of these poems from the Midlands is markedly different from that of the London-based Chaucer and, though influenced by French in the scenes at court in *Sir Gawain*, there are in the poems also many dialect words, often of Scandinavian origin, that belonged to northwest England.

PART VIII

THE DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH LITERATURE (SUMMARY)

¹¹The Development of English Literature (Summary)

Old English, Middle English and Chaucer

Old English

English, as we know it, descends from the language spoken by the North Germanic tribes who settled in England from the 5th century A.D. onwards. They had no writing (except runes, used as charms) until they learned the Latin alphabet from Roman missionaries. The earliest written works in Old English (as their language is now known to scholars) were probably composed orally at first, and may have been passed on from speaker to speaker before being written. We know the names of some of the later writers (Cædmon, Ælfric and King Alfred) but most writing is anonymous. Old English literature is mostly chronicle and poetry - lyric, descriptive but chiefly narrative or epic.

Middle English and Chaucer

From 1066 onwards, the language is known to scholars as Middle English. Ideas and themes from French and Celtic literature appear in English writing at about this time, but the first great name in English literature is that of Geoffrey Chaucer (?1343-1400). Chaucer introduces the iambic pentameter line, the rhyming couplet and other rhymes used in Italian poetry (a language in which rhyming is arguably much easier than in English, thanks to the frequency of terminal vowels). Some of Chaucer's work is prose and some is lyric poetry, but his greatest work is mostly narrative poetry, which we find in *Troilus and*

¹¹ <https://www.ucm.es/data/cont/docs/119-2014-02-19-1>.

Criseyde and *The Canterbury Tales*. Other notable mediaeval works are the anonymous *Pearl* and *Gawain and the Green Knight* (probably by the same author) and William Langlands' *Piers Plowman*.

Tudor lyric poetry

Modern lyric poetry in English begins in the early 16th century with the work of Sir Thomas Wyatt (1503-1542) and Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey (1517-1547). Wyatt, who is greatly influenced by the Italian, Francesco Petrarca (Petrarch) introduces the sonnet and a range of short lyrics to English, while Surrey (as he is known) develops unrhymed pentameters (or blank verse) thus inventing the verse form which will be of great use to contemporary dramatists. A flowering of lyric poetry in the reign of Elizabeth comes with such writers as Sir Philip Sidney (1554-1586), Edmund Spenser (1552-1599), Sir Walter Raleigh (1552-1618), Christopher Marlowe (1564-1593) and William Shakespeare (1564-1616). The major works of the time are Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella* and Shakespeare's sonnets.

Renaissance drama

The first great English dramatist is Marlowe. Before the 16th century English drama meant the amateur performances of Bible stories by craft guilds on public holidays. Marlowe's plays (*Tamburlaine*; *Dr. Faustus*; *Edward II* and *The Jew of Malta*) use the five act structure and the medium of blank verse, which Shakespeare finds so productive. Shakespeare develops and

virtually exhausts this form, his Jacobean successors producing work which is rarely performed today, though some pieces have literary merit, notably *The Duchess of Malfi* and *The White Devil* by John Webster (1580-1625) and *The Revenger's Tragedy* by Cyril Tourneur (1575-1626). The excessive and gratuitous violence of Jacobean plays leads to the clamour for closing down the theatres, which is enacted by parliament after the Civil war.

Metaphysical poetry

The greatest of Elizabethan lyric poets is John Donne (1572-1631), whose short love poems are characterized by wit and irony, as he seeks to wrest meaning from experience. The preoccupation with the big questions of love, death and religious faith marks out Donne and his successors who are often called metaphysical poets. (This name, coined by Dr. Samuel Johnson in an essay of 1779, was revived and popularized by T.S. Eliot, in an essay of 1921. It can be unhelpful to modern students who are unfamiliar with this adjective, and who are led to think that these poets belonged to some kind of school or group - which is not the case.) After his wife's death, Donne underwent a serious religious conversion, and wrote much fine devotional verse. The best known of the other metaphysicals are George Herbert (1593-1633), Andrew Marvell (1621-1678) and Henry Vaughan (1621-1695).

Epic poetry

Long narrative poems on heroic subjects mark the best work of classical Greek (Homer's *Iliad and Odyssey*) and Roman (Virgil's *Aeneid*) poetry. John Milton (1608-1674) who was Cromwell's secretary, set out to write a great biblical epic, unsure whether to write in Latin or English, but settling for the latter in *Paradise*

Lost. John Dryden (1631-1700) also wrote epic poetry, on classical and biblical subjects. Though Dryden's work is little read today it leads to a comic parody of the epic form, or mock-heroic. The best poetry of the mid-18th century is the comic writing of Alexander Pope (1688-1744). Pope is the best-regarded comic writer and satirist of English poetry. Among his many masterpieces, one of the more accessible is *The Rape of the Lock* (seekers of sensation should note that “rape” here has its archaic sense of “removal by force”; the “lock” is a curl of the heroine's hair). Serious poetry of the period is well represented by the neo-classical Thomas Gray (1716-1771) whose *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* virtually perfects the elegant style favoured at the time.

Restoration comedy

On the death of Oliver Cromwell (in 1658) plays were no longer prohibited. A new kind of comic drama, dealing with issues of sexual politics among the wealthy and the bourgeois, arose. This is Restoration Comedy, and the style developed well beyond the restoration period into the mid-18th century almost. The total number of plays performed is vast, and many lack real merit, but the best drama uses the restoration conventions for a serious examination of contemporary morality. A play which exemplifies this well is *The Country Wife* by William Wycherley (1640-1716).

Prose fiction and the novel

Prose narratives were written in the 16th century, but the novel as we know it could not arise, in the absence of a literate public. The popular and very contemporary medium for narrative in the

16th century is the theatre. The earliest novels reflect a bourgeois view of the world because this is the world of the authors and their readers (working people are depicted, but patronizingly, not from inside knowledge). Jonathan Swift (1667-1745), wrote satires in verse and prose. He is best-known for the extended prose work *Gulliver's Travels*, in which a fantastic account of a series of travels is the vehicle for satirizing familiar English institutions, such as religion, politics and law. Another writer who uses prose fiction, this time much more naturalistic, to explore other questions of politics or economics is Daniel Defoe (1661-1731), author of *Robinson Crusoe* and *Moll Flanders*.

The first English novel is generally accepted to be *Pamela* (1740), by Samuel Richardson (1689-1761): this novel takes the form of a series of letters; *Pamela*, a virtuous housemaid resists the advances of her rich employer, who eventually marries her. Richardson's work was almost at once satirized by Henry Fielding (1707-1754) in *Joseph Andrews* (Joseph is depicted as the brother of Richardson's *Pamela Andrews*) and *Tom Jones*. Another important novelist is Laurence Sterne (1713-68), author of *Tristram Shandy*.

After Fielding, the novel is dominated by the two great figures of Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832) and Jane Austen (1775-1817), who typify, respectively, the new regional, historical romanticism and the established, urbane classical views. Novels depicting extreme behaviour, madness or cruelty, often in historically remote or exotic settings are called Gothic. They are ridiculed by

Austen in *Northanger Abbey* but include one undisputed masterpiece, *Frankenstein*, by Mary Shelley (1797-1851).

Romanticism

A movement in philosophy but especially in literature, romanticism is the revolt of the senses or passions against the intellect and of the individual against the consensus. Its first stirrings may be seen in the work of William Blake (1757-1827), and in continental writers such as the Swiss philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau and the German playwrights Johann Christoph Friedrich Schiller and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. The publication, in 1798, by the poets William Wordsworth (1770-1850) and Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834) of a volume entitled *Lyrical Ballads* is a significant event in English literary history, though the poems were poorly received and few books sold. The elegant latinisms of Gray are dropped in favour of a kind of English closer to that spoken by real people (supposedly). Actually, the attempts to render the speech of ordinary people are not wholly convincing. Robert Burns (1759-1796) writes lyric verse in the dialect of lowland Scots (a variety of English). After Shakespeare, Burns is perhaps the most often quoted of writers in English. His *Auld Lang Syne* is sung every New Year's Eve.

The work of the later romantics John Keats (1795-1821) and his friend Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822; husband of Mary Shelley) is marked by an attempt to make language beautiful, and by an interest in remote history and exotic places. George Gordon, Lord Byron (1788-1824) uses romantic themes, sometimes comically, to explain contemporary events. Romanticism begins as a revolt against established views, but eventually becomes the

established outlook. Wordsworth becomes a kind of national monument, while the Victorians make what was at first revolutionary seem familiar, domestic and sentimental.

Victorian poetry

The major poets of the Victorian era are Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809-1892) and Robert Browning (1812-1889). Both are prolific and varied, and their work defies easy classification. Tennyson makes extensive use of classical myth and Arthurian legend, and has been praised for the beautiful and musical qualities of his writing. Browning's chief interest is in people; he uses blank verse in writing dramatic monologues in which the speaker achieves a kind of self-portraiture: his subjects are both historical individuals (Fra Lippo Lippi, Andrea del Sarto) and representative types or caricatures (Mr. Sludge the Medium). Other Victorian poets of note include Browning's wife, Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806-1861) and Christina Rossetti (1830-1894). Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889) is notable for his use of what he calls "sprung rhythm"; as in Old English verse syllables are not counted, but there is a pattern of stresses. Hopkins' work was not well-known until very long after his death.

The Victorian novel

The rise of the popular novel

The growth of literacy in the Victorian era leads to enormous diversification in the subjects and settings of the novel. In the 19th century, adult literacy increases markedly: attempts to provide education by the state, and self-help schemes are partly the cause

and partly the result of the popularity of the novel. Publication in instalments means that works are affordable for people of modest means. The change in the reading public is reflected in a change in the subjects of novels: the high bourgeois world of Austen gives way to an interest in characters of humble origins. The great novelists write works which in some ways transcend their own period, but which in detail very much explore the preoccupations of their time.

The greatest English novelist of the 19th century, and possibly of all time, is Charles Dickens (1812-1870). The complexity of his best work, the variety of tone, the use of irony and caricature create surface problems for the modern reader, who may not readily persist in reading. But *Great Expectations*, *Bleak House*, *Our Mutual Friend* and *Little Dorrit* are works with which every student should be acquainted.

Charlotte Brontë (1816-1855) and her sisters Emily (1818-1848) and Anne (1820-1849) are understandably linked together, but their work differs greatly. Charlotte is notable for several good novels, among which her masterpiece is *Jane Eyre*. Emily Brontë's *Wüthering Heights* is a strange work, which enjoys almost cult status. Its themes of obsessive love and self-destructive passion have proved popular with the 20th century reader.

After the middle of the century, the novel, as a form, becomes firmly-established, notable authors being Anthony Trollope (1815-82), Wilkie Collins (1824-89), William Makepeace Thackeray (1811-63). Among the best novels are Collins's *The Moonstone*, Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*,

Later Victorian novelists

The 'Turn of the Century' concerns begin to show in late Victorian novelist such as George Eliot (Mary Ann Evans; 1819-80) and Thomas Hardy (1840-1928). Eliot with *The Mill on the Floss*, *Adam Bede* and *Middlemarch*, and Hardy with *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, *The Return of the Native*, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure* begin to show a negative portrait of Victorian society and their stories end with the death of their protagonists, who cannot escape their black destinies.

Early 20th century poets

W.B. (William Butler) Yeats (1865-1939) is one of two figures who dominate modern poetry, the other being T.S. (Thomas Stearns) Eliot (1888-1965). Yeats was Irish; Eliot was born in the USA but settled in England, and took UK citizenship in 1927. Yeats uses conventional lyric forms, but explores the connection between modern themes and classical and romantic ideas. Eliot uses elements of conventional forms, within an unconventionally structured whole in his greatest works. Where Yeats is prolific as a poet, Eliot's reputation largely rests on two long and complex works: *The Waste Land* (1922) and *Four Quartets* (1943). The work of these two has overshadowed the work of the best late Victorian, Edwardian and Georgian poets, some of whom came to prominence during the First World War. Among these are Thomas Hardy, Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936), A.E. Housman (1859-1936), Edward Thomas (1878-1917), Rupert Brooke (1887-1915), Siegfried Sassoon (1886-1967), Wilfred Owen (1893-1918) and Isaac Rosenberg (1890-1918).

Early modern writers

The late Victorian and early modern periods are spanned by two novelists of foreign birth: the American Henry James (1843-1916) and the Pole Joseph Conrad (Josef Korzeniowski; 1857-1924). James relates character to issues of culture and ethics, but his style can be opaque; Conrad's narratives may resemble adventure stories in incident and setting, but his real concern is with issues of character and morality. The best of their work would include James's *The Portrait of a Lady* and Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, *Nostromo* and *The Secret Agent*. We should also include R.L. Stevenson (1850-94) writer of *Kidnappe*, *Treasure Island*, and *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, Oscar Wilde (1854-1900), author of *The Importance of Being Earnest*, and *The Portrait of Dorian Gray*.

Other notable writers of the early part of the century include George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950), H.G. Wells (1866-1946), and E.M. Forster (1879-1970). Shaw was an essay-writer, language scholar and critic, but is best remembered as a playwright. Of his many plays, the best-known is *Pygmalion* (even better known today in its form as the musical *My Fair Lady*). Wells is celebrated as a popularizer of science, but his best novels explore serious social and cultural themes, *The History of Mr. Polly* being perhaps his masterpiece. Forster's novels include *Howard's End*, *A Room with a View* and *A Passage to India*.

More radically modern writing is found in the novels of James Joyce (1882-1941), of Virginia Woolf (1882-1941), and of D.H. Lawrence (1885-1930). Where Joyce and Woolf challenge traditional narrative methods of viewpoint and structure, Lawrence is concerned to explore human relationships more

profoundly than his predecessors, attempting to marry the insights of the new psychology with his own acute observation. Working-class characters are presented as serious and dignified; their manners and speech are not objects of ridicule. Other notable novelists include George Orwell (1903-50), Evelyn Waugh (1903-1966), Graham Greene (1904-1991) and the 1983 Nobel prize-winner, William Golding (1911-1993).

Poetry in the later 20th century

Between the two wars, a revival of romanticism in poetry is associated with the work of W.H. (Wystan Hugh) Auden (1907-73), Louis MacNeice (1907-63) and Cecil Day-Lewis (1904-72). Auden seems to be a major figure on the poetic landscape, but is almost too contemporary to see in perspective. The Welsh poet, Dylan Thomas (1914-53) is notable for strange effects of language, alternating from extreme simplicity to massive overstatement. Among poets who have achieved celebrity in the second half of the century is the 1995 Irish Nobel laureate Seamus Heaney (b. 1939).

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